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(54) **Ink jet cartridge**

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Description

[0001] The present invention relates to an ink jet cartridge usable in an ink jet recording apparatus using the ink jet recording method to perform recording by ejecting ink.

[0002] A number of printers, facsimile apparatuses, word processors, and other information apparatuses are being developed today. As these apparatuses, the ink jet recording method is widely used because it is capable of providing high resolution, high speed recording as well as enabling compact fabrication and low cost. Among many other advantages, compact fabrication and low running costs are particularly significant.

[0003] As shown in Fig. 18, there has hitherto been a method wherein a head cartridge 1801 integrally formed with a recording head 1801a and an ink tank 1801b filled with ink is exchangeably mounted on a mounting unit 1802 of an apparatus. However, this method has a drawback that its running costs are high because the recording head in this case is an article of consumption. Also, the recording head 1801a is yet to reach the end of its life when ink has been consumed completely. This is a waste because a recording head 1801a which is still usable for recording is discarded.

[0004] There is also a method wherein a recording head 1901 and an ink tank 1903 are structured separately and are exchangeably mounted on the mounting unit 1903 of an recording apparatus individually as shown in Fig. 19, for example. However, with this method, it is necessary to provide the ink supply passage 1904 on the recording apparatus in order to supply ink in the ink tank to the recording head. As a result, costs are inevitably increased. This also hinders making the apparatus compact. Moreover, when ink tank materials of different colors are utilized, ink mixture takes place in the ink passages in a recording apparatus even if the recording heads 1901 and ink tanks 1902 are replaced. In order to avoid this mixing, it is necessary that the recording heads 1901, ink tanks 1902 and ink supply passages 1904 are mounted on the mounting units 1903 separately for each color.

[0005] Also, as shown in Fig. 20, for example, there is a method wherein a recording head 1701 is connected and fixed to the mounting unit 1702 of a recording apparatus while an ink tank 1703 is exchangeably connected to the foregoing recording head 1701. This method, however, makes it difficult to replace the recording heads with ease when the recording head is damaged. Also, when ink tanks having ink materials of different colors, there will take place a mixture of ink in the recording head. Accordingly, recording heads 1701 must be provided in the mounting unit 1702 separately for each color of ink.

[0006] US-A-4709247 and EP-A-0424133 describe ink jet cartridges wherein the cartridge is movable by a lever to promote electrical contact between electrodes of the ink jet cartridge and a carriage. EP-A-0381392

describes an ink jet cartridge wherein an ink tank is removably mounted to an ink jet head by insertion pins which enable the ink tank to be removed from the ink jet head in an upwards direction.

[0007] The present invention is designed in consideration of the above-mentioned problems.

[0008] It is an object of the invention to provide an ink jet cartridge capable of reducing the running costs enabling easy replacement of ink tanks and recording heads, preventing ink from being scattered when the recording heads are replaced, and allowing ink color replacement simply without any mixtures.

[0009] In one aspect, the present invention provides an ink jet cartridge removably mountable on a carriage of an ink jet apparatus, said cartridge comprising:

a head housing provided with an ink jet head; and
an ink tank housing for storing ink to be supplied to said ink jet head,

characterised in that said head housing has a frame member for supporting said ink jet head and accommodating said ink tank housing, said frame member having an engaging portion for engaging with said ink tank housing and a cutout portion for forming a finger-grippable portion for removing and mounting said ink tank housing, and wherein said ink tank housing has an engaging portion for engaging with said engaging portion of said frame member and said ink tank housing further has a finger-grippable portion for removing and mounting said ink tank housing.

[0010] In another aspect, the present invention provides an ink jet cartridge removably mountable on a carriage of an ink jet apparatus, said cartridge comprising:

a head housing provided with an ink jet head and a receiving portion for receiving an ink tank for storing ink to be supplied to said head; and
an ink tank removably mounted on said receiving portion to store ink to be supplied to said head,

characterised in that said receiving portion has an opening capable of removably mounting said ink tank, which opening opens upwardly of a direction in which said head housing is arranged to be mounted onto said carriage so as to be contained in any upwardly opening carriage opening, and in that said ink tank is removably mounted when said head housing is mounted or not mounted on said carriage.

[0011] In another aspect, the present invention provides an ink jet cartridge removably mountable on the carriage of an ink jet printer, said cartridge comprising a head housing provided with an ink jet head and a separate ink tank housing for storing ink to be supplied to the ink jet head, and characterised in that the head housing has walls defining a recess into which the ink tank housing is inserted when the ink jet head is to be coupled to the ink tank housing, at least one wall having a cut-

away portion which exposes a finger-grippable portion on the ink tank housing when the two housings are coupled, the two housings having complementary clip means for holding the two housings together.

[0012] A cartridge embodying the invention enables running costs to be reduced because the recording heads and ink tanks can be replaced selectively, leading to an improvement of operational economy.

[0013] A cartridge embodying the invention also enables recording heads and ink tanks to be replaced as a unit; hence enabling the maintenance of the recording heads and ink tanks having different ink colors. In this way, it is possible to change ink colors simply with the replacement of these heads and ink tanks thus maintained.

[0014] Furthermore, since the recording heads and ink tanks can be replaced on a carriage, the operativity is improved while preventing ink from being scattered.

[0015] Moreover, there is less opportunity to touch the recording head by hand directly. Therefore, it is possible to prevent dust particles and air to be mixed with ink; thus enabling the recording reliability to be enhanced.

[0016] In an embodiment, the ink tank is mounted on the carrier and there is no need for the provision of any ink supply tubes and others. This will enable a compact fabrication of the apparatus. In addition, when ink is completely consumed, it will suffice only if ink tanks are replaced, not the cartridge where the head is fabricated integrally therewith. Thus, the running cost can be reduced.

[0017] Also, when recording heads are replaced, it is easy to separate the carrier and head. This will make the replacement easier.

[0018] Moreover, it is possible to use one kind of recording head for various modes of head cartridge, which enables its application to many different types of recording apparatuses. Hence, the versatility is enhanced to provide a desirable efficiency.

[0019] In an embodiment of the present invention, indicators are provided to indicate that the recording head and ink tank has been correctly coupled. This enables assured coupling of the ink tank and recording head by conducting the coupling operation until positioning indications or positioning couplers provided for the ink tank and recording head are matched.

[0020] Embodiments of the present invention will now be described by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view schematically illustrating an embodiment of an ink jet cartridge including for illustrative purposes and not falling within the scope of the invention claimed.

Figure 2 is a schematic partial enlargement perspective view illustrating the cartridge shown in Figure 1.

Figure 3 is a cross-sectional view of a partial enlargement of the cartridge shown in Figure 1.

Figure 4 is a perspective view schematically illustrating a first mode of an exchangeable type of cartridge according to Figure 1.

Figure 5 is a perspective view schematically illustrating a second mode of an exchangeable type of cartridge.

Figure 6 is a schematic plan view illustrating the way in which pressure is exerted.

Figure 7 is a perspective view schematically illustrating a recording apparatus with which an ink jet cartridge embodying the present invention is usable.

Figure 8 is a perspective view of part of the recording apparatus shown in Figure 7.

Figure 9 is an exploded perspective view of part of the ink jet recording apparatus shown in Figure 7.

Figures 10A and 10B are schematic perspective views illustrating an information processing apparatus using an ink jet recording apparatus with a cartridge according to the present invention.

Figure 11 is an electrical circuit diagram showing an information processing apparatus using an ink jet recording apparatus.

Figure 12 is a flowchart showing a recording operation.

Figure 13 is an electrical circuit diagram showing the structure of another information processing apparatus using an ink jet recording apparatus.

Figure 14 is a schematically perspective view illustrating the state where a recording head and ink tank of an ink cartridge according to an embodiment are parted.

Figure 15 is a schematic view illustrating the state where the recording head and ink tank are coupled.

Figure 16 is a schematically perspective view illustrating a state of where a recording head and ink tank of an ink cartridge according to still another embodiment are coupled.

Figure 17 is a schematically perspective view illustrating another way in which the recording head, ink tank, and carrier are coupled.

Figure 18 is a schematically cross-sectional view illustrating a prior art.

Figure 19 is a schematically cross-sectional view illustrating a prior art.

Figure 20 is a schematically cross-sectional view illustrating a prior art.

[0021] Hereinafter, with reference to the accompanying drawings, the description will be made in detail of the embodiments according to the present invention.

[0022] Figure 1 is a schematically perspective view illustrating the recording head unit and carrier unit of a recording apparatus included for illustrative purposes and not falling within the scope of the invention claimed. In Figure 1, a reference numeral 1 designates a recording head which ejects ink in accordance with electric signals; 2, an ink tank containing ink to supply it to the re-

recording head 1; 102, a carrier provided for the recording apparatus body to hold the recording head 1 and ink tank 2; 106, a head lever to hold or release the recording head 1; 107, an ink tank lever to mount or demount the ink tank 2; and 108, a head fixing spring to fix the recording head 1 to the carrier 102. With these components, the recording head unit and carrier unit are constituted.

[0023] Figure 2 is a schematically perspective view illustrating the recording head 1 and ink tank 2 shown in Figure 1. In Figure 2 a reference number 10 designates the ink supply inlet which serves as the ink passage for ink to be supplied from the ink tank 2 to the recording head 1; 11, an ink supply outlet to supply ink from the ink tank 2 to the recording head 1; 12, coupling nails to guide and hold the recording head 1 and ink tank 2 when integrally coupled; 13, coupling nail guiding grooves to engage with the coupling nails 12; and 14, ink tank holding grooves to hold the ink tank 2 when the ink tank 2 and recording head 1 are mounted or demounted. With these elements, a head cartridge 101 is constituted.

[0024] The recording head 1 comprises a substrate on which are formed a plurality of electrothermal transducers to generate thermal energy to be utilized for ejecting ink and a driving circuit to drive them; discharging ports and liquid passages corresponding to each of the above-mentioned plural electrothermal transducers; and further a ceiling board laminated thereon to constitute a common liquid chamber conductively connected to each of the liquid passages. Then, the recording head thus structured is mounted on the apparatus in such a manner that the discharging port surface having the discharging ports of the head are placed to face a recording medium.

[0025] The ink tank 2 is a tank which holds ink therein and supplies it to the recording head 1 appropriately in order to refill the ink which has been consumed by recording. If two single bodies constitute an ink tank, the ink supply outlet 11 is sealed by sealing means (not shown) to prevent any ink leakage therefrom. This sealing means is automatically or manually released when the ink tank is coupled to the recording head 1 to enable the ink supply. Also, it may be possible to arrange a mechanism so that air is introduced from the outside as the volume of ink is being reduced by the ink consumption. Further, it may be possible to provide a mechanism in the inside to keep a pressure exerted slightly negative on the ink to be supplied to the recording head for the purpose of improving the printing quality as well as preventing any ink leakage.

[0026] The recording head 1 and ink tank 2 are used for a recording apparatus in operation in a form of a cartridge 101 which is integrally fabricated with them. Now, the description will be made of the way in which to integrate them.

[0027] Fundamentally, the recording head 1 and ink tank 2 are integrated by coupling the ink supply inlet 10 and ink supply outlet 11. Therefore, this portion is care-

fully arranged to prevent ink leakage from or air intake into the ink passages. In the present example, a method is adopted to utilize the resiliency of a mold member for the purpose. In other words, the ink supply inlet hole 10 and the ink supply outlet hole 11 are formed cylindrically and then the inner diameter of the ink supply outlet 11 is slightly smaller than the outer diameter of the ink supply inlet hole 10. Thus, when the ink supply inlet hole 10 is pressed into the ink supply outlet hole 11, these two holes are tightly integrated while being slightly deformed in the radial direction. Also, the coupling portion is not necessarily of a mold member, but it will suffice only if the material has a sealing capability. The other coupling methods will be described later.

[0028] In the integration of the recording head 1 and ink tank 2, while it is good enough to couple the ink supply inlet 10 and ink supply outlet 11 as described above, the coupling is intensified in the present embodiment by providing the coupling nails 12 and coupling nail guiding grooves 13 in order to prevent them from being disengaged simply due to any unexpected force that may be exerted when the head cartridge 101 is handled or to facilitate the integration. In other words, the coupling nails 12 formed integrally with the ink supply inlet 10 by molding and capable of being resiliently deformed are provided with protrusions at the leading ends, and are fitted into the coupling nail guiding grooves 13 while being resiliently deformed by the portions corresponding to the height of the protrusions. The coupling is completed when the protrusions of the coupling nails 13 reach the deepest portions arranged in the rear sides of the coupling nail guiding grooves 13.

[0029] Further, the coupling nails 12 serve as guides so as to allow the ink supply inlet 10 and ink supply outlet 11 to be easily fitted when the recording head 1 and ink tank 2 are coupled. In other words, the coupling nails 12 are made longer than the ink supply inlet 10 so that the coupling nails 12 are to be in contact with the ink tank 2 before the ink supply inlet 10 reaches the ink supply outlet 11. Here, the leading ends of the coupling nails 12 are cut off diagonally. This diagonally cut off portion serves as its guide in the direction indicated by an arrow *a* in Fig. 2 to facilitate the engagement with the coupling nail guiding grooves. Also, the protrusions provided at the leading ends of the coupling nails 12 are also cut off diagonally to promote an easier engagement by serving as its guide in the direction indicated by an arrow *b* in Fig. 2.

[0030] In this respect, while the coupling nails are provided on the recording head side in the present embodiment, its position is not confined thereto. It may be possible to position them on the ink tank 2 side or on both sides of the recording head 1 and ink tank 2.

[0031] Now, the description will be made of the mechanical and electrical connections of the recording head 1 to the carrier 102.

[0032] Fig. 3 is a cross-sectional view illustrating the portion where the carrier 102 is coupled to the recording

head 1 viewed in the direction indicated by an arrow a in Fig. 1, in which a reference numeral 109 designates a positioning pin which is fitted into a hole provided for the recording head 1 fixed to the carrier 102 to set the position in the vertical direction in Fig. 3 and in the direction perpendicular to the plane thereof; 110, a stopper fixed to the carrier 102 to receive the recording head 1 which is pressed in the direction indicated by an arrow a in Fig. 3; 401, a flexible cable electrically connecting the recording apparatus body and the recording head 1; 111, a pad placed between the flexible cable 401 and the carrier 102 to support the flexible cable 401 resiliently; and 15, a contact provided for the recording head 1 and electrically connected to a heater unit in the recording head 1.

[0033] The recording head 1 is pressed in the direction indicated by an arrow a by means of the head fixing spring 108 through a lever which is not shown. Its position is unanimously fixed by the hole provided for the recording head 1, the positioning pin 109, and the intervention of the stopper 110. In this way, the recording head 1 and carrier 102 are mechanically coupled.

[0034] Also, there are arranged a plurality of electrically contacting points on the contact 15 of the recording head 1 and the end of the flexible cable 401 in the positions opposite to each other. By pressing them with a given pressure, the recording apparatus body and the recording head 1 are electrically connected. At this juncture, the plural electrically contacting points must be in contact under compression. To this end, the pad 111 made of a resilient material is inserted in the compressing portion so as to press those contacting points evenly. The material of the pad 111 is silicon rubber, for example, and it is arranged that the reaction force exerted thereby when depressed is made much smaller than the force exerted by the head fixing spring 108 which presses the recording head 1.

[0035] Particularly, the electrical contact provided for the flexible cable 401 may be extruded when configured in order to cause the reaction force to be concentrated when depressed so that the connection is made reliably.

[0036] In this respect, the electrical or mechanical connections are arranged on the recording head side in the present example, but irrespective of this arrangement, the connections may be arranged on the ink tank 2 side or on both sides of the recording head 1 and ink tank 2. Also, it may be possible to arrange the electrical connections and the mechanical connections separately on either side, respectively.

[0037] Now, the description will be made of the handling of the recording head 1 and ink tank 2, that is, the method to replace an exhausted ink tank 2 with a new ink tank 2 or to replace the recording head 1 which is disabled to be used any more due to some causes.

[0038] As a first mode, the fixation between the recording head 1 and carrier 102 is released. From the carrier 102, the recording head 1 and ink tank 2 are removed as they are still in a coupled state. Then, in a

state where they are detached from the carrier 102 (hereinafter referred to as off carrier condition), the recording head 1 and ink tank 2 are separated or coupled.

[0039] Fig. 4 is a schematically perspective view illustrating the state where the recording head 1 and ink tank 2 are removed from the carrier 102 as they are still in a coupled condition. In this case, the head lever 106 is pulled up from the state as shown in Fig. 1 to the position shown in Fig. 4A rotatively in the direction indicated by an arrow a. Thus, the pressure exerted to the recording head 1 by the head fixing spring 108 is released. At this juncture, the recording head 1 and ink tank 2 are shifted in the direction indicated by an arrow b as they are still in a coupled condition by a lever (not shown) arranged in the carrier 102. This causes the engagement between the positioning pin 109 and the hole of the recording head 1 to be disengaged; hence enabling the recording head 1 and ink tank 2 to be shifted in the direction indicated by an arrow c in Fig. 4 as they are still in a coupled state, and to be in the off carrier condition. In the off carrier condition, a force is given in a direction opposite to the direction in which the recording head 1 and ink tank 2 are coupled to separate them and replace the one which requires the replacement. Then, by the coupling method described earlier, both of them are integrated and mounted in the carrier 102 in the reversed order to terminate the replacement operation.

[0040] In this respect, the head lever 106 is used to release the pressure exerted on the recording head 1 in the present example, but irrespective of this method, it may be possible to make an arrangement so that the lever which presses the recording head 1 can be shifted directly. Also, irrespective of the method wherein the head fixing spring 108 is used to press the recording head for its fixation, it may be possible to use a latch hook or the like having a spring capability for the head fixation.

[0041] Furthermore, it may be possible to mount or demount the recording head 1 and ink tank 2 in the coupled state by holding the recording head 1 directly against the pressure exerted by such a pressing means.

[0042] When the first mode is adopted, the following effects are obtainable:

[0043] When either one of the recording head and ink tank must be replaced, it is possible to replace only the one which needs the replacement. Therefore, the operational economy is improved.

[0044] Also, the recording head 1 and ink tank 2 can be replaced as they are in the coupled condition. The recording heads and ink tanks having different colors can be retained as they are in the off carrier condition. Therefore, it becomes simple to change recording colors.

[0045] As a second mode, the recording head 1 and ink tank 2 are separated on the carrier 102 while the recording head 1 and carrier are still fixed (hereinafter referred to as on carrier condition).

[0046] Fig. 5 is a schematically perspective view illus-

trating the state where the ink tank 2 is separated from the recording head 1 on the carrier 102. In this case, by pulling up the tank lever 107 from the state shown in Fig. 1 to the position shown in Fig. 5A rotatively in the direction indicated by an arrow *a*, a lever (not shown) arranged in the carrier 102 engages with the ink tank guide groove 14 which is provided on the side of the ink tank 2 and is shifted in the direction indicated by an arrow *b* in Fig. 5. At this juncture, the fixation of the recording head 1 is in the same state as Fig. 1, and it is not shifted together with the ink tank 2. Accordingly, the engagement between the recording head 1 and ink tank 2 are disengaged; thus enabling them to be separated. Further, by allowing the ink tank 2 to be shifted in the direction indicated by an arrow *c* in Fig. 5, it can be removed from the carrier 102.

[0047] In this respect, if the recording head 1 is resiliently pressed by the head fixing spring 108 as in the present example, there is a possibility that the head fixation is released depending on the way the separating force is exerted. It is preferable to arrange the structure as follows:

[0048] Fig. 6 is a schematic plan view showing the way in which such a force is exerted. In Fig. 6, the recording head 1 is pressed by a force *f*₁ exerted by the head fixing spring 108 to the carrier 102. Also, it is assumed that a force *f*₂ is needed to disengage the coupling nails 12 and the ink supply inlet 10 in order to separate the recording head 1 and ink tank 2. In this case, it is possible to prevent the fixation of the recording head 1 to be released in the separating operation by defining the strengths of the forces as *f*₁ > *f*₂.

[0049] Here, the separation is executed by exerting a force equivalent to the force *f*₂ using a tank lever 107, but irrespective of this method, it may be possible to arrange the structure so that the ink tank 2 is pulled up in the direction indicated by an arrow *b* in Fig. 5 by holding it directly to separate the recording head 1 and ink tank 2.

[0050] When the second mode is adopted, there are the following effects in addition to those obtainable in the first mode:

[0051] It is possible to control the speed with which the ink tank is pulled out when it is separated by designing the cam configuration of the tank lever 107; thus enabling the prevention of the ink scattering from the ink supply inlet 10 and ink supply outlet 11.

[0052] Also, there is no need for holding the recording head 1 by hand directly. Accordingly, there is no possibility that a hand touches the vicinity of the ink ejection nozzles of the recording head 1. Hence, it is possible to prevent any unwanted contamination which may produce adverse effects on printing.

[0053] Also, the portion where the force exerted by the ink tank 2 can be specified. Therefore, it will suffice only if such a portion is reinforced. All the other portions can be structured thin to make the ink tank lighter with a more ink containing capability among other effects.

[0054] Subsequently, the description will be made of the structure and operation of a recording apparatus wherein the above-mentioned recording head 1, ink tank 2, and carrier 102 are mounted.

5 [0055] Fig. 7 is a schematically perspective view illustrating the outline of a recording apparatus.

[0056] A carrier 102 with a head cartridge 101 being mounted has a pin (not shown) to be engaged with the spiral groove 105 of a lead screw 103 which is interrelated with the normal and reverse rotations of a carrier motor 402a and rotated through a transmission mechanism (not shown). Thus, the carrier is reciprocated in the directions indicated by arrows *a* and *b* following the rotation of the lead screw 103. Here, a reference numeral 104 designates a slide shaft to regulate the rotation of the carrier. Also, with a carrier sensor 510, the carrier 102 establishes the position (home position) in the directions indicated by arrows *a* and *b*. A reference numeral 301 designates a recovery unit which comprises a cap 302 facing the discharging surface of the head cartridge 101 at a given position (a home position, for example) outside the recording area for the head cartridge 101, and a cap advance and retraction driver (not shown) to keep the cap in contact with the discharging surface to protect it when recording is at rest or the like occasions. Also, it is possible to arrange a pump to suck overly viscous ink, dust particles, and air bubbles from the discharging ports when the cap is in contact with the discharging surface in order to maintain the ink ejection conditions desirably, and a member to contain such an unwanted ink thus sucked.

[0057] Furthermore, a wiper (not shown) is provided to clean the vicinity of the discharging ports of the head cartridge 101.

35 [0058] A reference numeral 201 designates a feed roller to feed a recording medium 6 in the directions indicated by an arrow *c* in Fig. 7 and 202, a pinch roller to press the recording medium 6 against the feed roller 201. The recording medium 6 is fed intermittently in the directions indicated by an arrow *c* in Fig. 7 while being pinched by a pair of these rollers. The feed roller 201 is coupled to a feeding motor 402b through a transmission mechanism formed by a feed roller gear 205 and feed roller idler gear 206 so as to receive the transmission of the driving force. Also, pinch roller 202 is capable of being in contact with or apart from the feed roller 201 by the operation of a release lever 210.

[0059] A reference numeral 207 designates a platen to regulate the recording surface of the recording medium 6 to keep it flat. Also, it may be possible to provide a member to prevent the recording medium 6 from being raised by pressing it against the platen 207.

[0060] A reference numeral 213 designates a discharge roller which rotates in synchronism with the feed roller 201 to deliver the recording medium 6 after recording in the directions indicated by an arrow *c* in Fig. 7. There is provided a spur roller 214 at a position opposite to the discharge roller 213 through the recording medi-

um 6. With those rollers, the recording medium 6 is delivered outside the printer after the recording is over.

[0061] As shown in Fig. 8, the recovery unit comprises a cap 4021 to cap the discharging surface 4002c of the recording head 4002a; a pump unit 4023 which makes the inside of the cap negatively pressurized to suck from the cap 4021 the waste ink forcibly exhausted from the discharging surface 4002c and forward it to a waste ink tube 4031d; and a transmission mechanism (timing gear) 4024 consisting of a known cam and gear mechanism to transmit driving forces to the foregoing cap 4021 for its forward and backward movement with respect to the discharging surface 4002c as well as for the driving of the foregoing pump unit 4023. To the aforesaid timing gear 4024, the rotational driving force of the carrier motor is transmitted through a carrier motor pinion 4020.

[0062] Also, the pump unit 4023 comprises a plunger pump shown in Fig. 9, in which a reference numeral 4031 designates a cylinder having a cylindrical cylinder portion 4031a and a guide member (not shown) which guides a plunger 4022 which will be described later. Then, it is partially cut off in the axial direction to provide an ink passage; 4031b, a cap lever receptacle formed to allow the lever seal which will be described later to be inserted. Also, a reference numeral 4031c designates an ink suction inlet which is opened to a given position; 4031d, a waste ink tube the integrally formed leading end of which is inserted into a waste ink absorbent 4028; also, 4031e, a cap open and close protrusion which is pressed by the cap open and close cam 4024a of the timing gear 4024 to cause the cylinder 4031 to rotate to open and close the cap 4021.

[0063] A reference numeral 4022 designates a plunger comprising a operation shaft 4022a, a piston stopper 4022b, a piston receptacle 4022c, and a pump seal stopper 4022d. Then, a groove 4022e which serves as an ink passage is continuously formed on the aforesaid operation shaft 4022a. This groove is partially inserted into the aforesaid guide of the cylinder 4031 to hold the rotation of the plunger 4022. On the operation shaft 4022a, a lead groove 4022f is formed to control the reciprocation of the plunger 4022. The protrusion (not shown) of a stroke gear 4005 is inserted into this lead groove 4022b. Then, by the normal and reverse rotations of the stroke gear 4005, a desired stroking amount is given to the plunger 4022 to generate the negative pressure.

[0064] A reference numeral 4032 designates a piston made of a rubber material such as NBR. Its outer diameter is made larger than the inner diameter of the cylinder 4031 by a given amount, and it is appropriately compressed when inserted into the foregoing cylinder 4031; 4033, a pump seal made of a rubber material such as silicon rubber or NBR, which is inserted into the cylinder 4031. Its inner diameter is made slightly smaller to obtain a given pressure with respect to the plunger 4022 and, further, it can reciprocate in the cylinder 4031 by

being pressed by the pump seal stopper 4022d of the plunger 4022 and the piston receptacle 4022c. Also, it may be possible to reduce the sliding friction between the cylinder 4031 and plunger 4022 by applying lubricant to the surface of the pump seal.

[0065] A reference numeral 4034 designates a cap lever. An ink guide (not shown) biases the cap lever seal which will be described later. The other rotational shaft 4034a is rotatively mounted to the hole 4031f of the cylinder 4031 by snap fitting, and 4035, a cap lever seal to which the ink guide of the aforesaid cap lever 4034 is inserted by compression. It is further inserted into the cap lever receptacle 4031b of the cylinder 4031.

[0066] A reference numeral 4021 designates a cap made of an annular chlorinated butyl rubber or some other resilient material having a triangular cross-section, and is mounted on the cap mounting unit 4034b of the foregoing cap lever 4034; also, 4042, a preliminary discharging pad which is made of a polymeric absorbent as the foregoing blade cleaner 4039. It is mounted on the foregoing cap lever 4034. The aforesaid preliminary discharging pad is an absorbent to absorb the ink preliminarily ejected aside from the ordinary ink ejection for a printing operation. This preliminary ink ejection is conducted to prevent ink on the discharging surface 4002c from being dried in the printing operation.

[0067] Subsequently, the description will be made of an information processing apparatus in which a recording apparatus having a cartridge embodying the present invention is incorporated. Its structure and electrical circuitry will be described.

[0068] Fig. 10A is a schematically perspective view illustrating the outer appearance of an information processing apparatus 604 wherein a recording apparatus is incorporated.

[0069] In Fig. 10A, a reference numeral 601 designates the above-mentioned printing unit; 602, a key board provided with keys to input letters, numerals, and other characters as well as keys to give various instructions; and 603, an indication unit provided with a display. Fig. 10B is a schematically perspective view illustrating the outer appearance of the information processing apparatus 604. In Figure 10B, a reference numeral 605 designates a window provided for replacing the foregoing recording head 1 and ink tank 2; 606, a cover for the window 605 to cover it except when the replacement operation is executed. The window 605 is made large enough to provide a head lever 601 and tank lever 605 to be operated when the recording head 1 or ink tank 2 is replaced. A reference numeral 607 designates a change over switch for the intended replacement of the recording head 1 or ink tank 2. When the change over switch 607 is turned on, a carrier motor 402a is driven to shift the carrier 102 to the window position 605 from the foregoing home position or the recording area. In this position, when the replacement of the recording heads 1 or ink tanks 2 is completed, the carrier 102 is shifted to its home position when a release switch 608

is turned on and then a recovery unit 301 is actuated to execute the ink suction and ejection, or wiping and other recovery operations. Thus, the current status returns to the operation before the change over switch 607 is turned on. Now, Fig. 11 is a block diagram showing the structure of electric circuits for an information processing apparatus.

[0070] In Fig. 11, a reference numeral 501 designates a controller to execute main controlling; 502, a CPU for a microcomputer mode to execute certain procedures, for example; 503, RAM for providing development and work areas for text data and image data; 504, ROM for storing programs corresponding to the aforesaid procedures; 505, a timer for the CPU 502 to work out execution cycles and for the printing unit 601 to work out the timing required when a recording operation is executed; and 506, an interface unit to connect signals from the CPU 502 to the peripheral apparatuses.

[0071] Also, a reference numeral 507 designates a controller for the printing unit 601; 508, a head driver to transmit recording signals and electric power to the head cartridge 101; 509a and 509b, motor drivers to transmit signals and electric power required to drive a carrier motor 402a and feed motor 402b, respectively; 510, a carrier sensor to detect the current position of the carrier 102 and determine whether the carrier 102 is currently at its home position or not, for example; and 511, a paper sensor to detect the presence of a recording medium 6 in order not to perform recording on any places other than the recording medium 6 when the recording medium 6 is yet to be inserted or a recording is terminated up to the end of a page.

[0072] Moreover, a reference numeral 605 designates an external storage such as FDD, HDD, or RAM card, and 512, an external interface to communicate with other information processing apparatuses, or to control peripheral apparatuses by making connection with inner buses.

[0073] In this respect, although not included in the block diagram shown in Fig. 11, an electric power source is provided to supply current to the above-mentioned electric circuits. For such an electric power source, there is available a rechargeable battery, disposable dry cells, or AC power converter when the information processing apparatus body is fixed for use, for example.

[0074] With the above-mentioned structure of electric circuits, recordings are performed on the recording medium 6 by the recording unit. Now, using a flowchart shown in Fig. 12, the recording operation control sequence will be described briefly.

[0075] With an instruction to start recording by the use of the recording instruction key on an indication operation unit of a printer body or by an external instruction to start recording through the external interface, a series of procedures are started as follows:

[0076] At first, in step S1, whether the indication operation unit is in the on line status or not is determined. This is a precaution not to start any recording operation

without a required preparation on the printer side when an external instruction to start recording operation is transmitted mainly by communications. Here, if the indication operation unit is determined to be in the on line status, the procedure will proceed to step S2.

[0077] In the step S2, whether the recording medium 6 is set on the printing unit or not is determined in accordance with signals from the paper sensor 511 and others. This is a precaution not to start printing because if any printing is started without a recording medium, ink is scattered in the printer to stain the apparatus itself particularly when an ink jet printer or the like is used as a recording apparatus, or the ink which is a recording medium is wastefully consumed.

[0078] Furthermore, in the step S2, it may be possible to determine whether the pinch roller 202 and feed roller 201 are released or not in addition to the detection of the presence of the recording medium. This is required to prevent any irregular feeding of the recording medium because when the pinch roller 202 is released, the normal feed is impossible even if the recording medium 210 is set. Whether the pinch roller 202 is release or not can be detected by means of a mechanical switch provided for the release lever or the like. Here, if it is found that the recording medium is not normally set, the procedure will proceed to the next step 3.

[0079] In the step S3, a message is emitted to call the attention of an operator to set the recording medium. Such a message can be emitted by illuminating light in the indication operation unit or make a buzzer sound.

[0080] Also, in the step S3, if the recording medium 6 is found to have been set, the procedure will proceed to step S4.

[0081] In the step, the recording is started. With the instruction from the CPU 502, the head driver 508 drives the head cartridge 101. Also, in synchronism therewith, the motor drivers 509a and 509b drive the carrier motor 402a and feed motor 402b, respectively, to perform the recording while allowing the carrier 102 to be shifted in the main scanning direction, the recording medium to be shifted in the sub-scanning direction, and the recording head 1 to be cleaned among others.

[0082] Lastly, in step S5, if an instruction to terminate the recording operation is given by the corresponding signal from the CPU 502, for example, or if it is determined that any more recording is possible when the number of recording lines in a page in a given sub-scanning direction has been reached or the terminating end of the recording area in a recording medium 6 is detected by the paper sensor 511, it is judged that the recording operation is terminated and that the recording operation procedures are completed.

[0083] In step S6, then, the carrier 102 is returned to its home position as a procedure to terminate the recording operation. This is carried out to cap the ink discharging surface of the recording head 1 for its protection in preparation for the power turn off after the termination of the recording operation. Then, if, for example,

the feed motor 402b is driven for a given amount or the feed motor 402b is driven until when the paper sensor 510 detects and verifies that the recording medium 6 has been discharged. In this way, the recording medium is discharged. After that, the CPU 502 instructs the indication operation unit to display the termination of the recording operation or informs the peripheral apparatuses accordingly through the external interface; hence terminating the recording operation completely.

[0084] As described above, the recording head and ink tank are separable, and then, by arranging the structure of the ink jet recording apparatus such as to conduct the separating or integrating operation either in the on carrier condition or off carrier condition, the following effects can be obtained:

[0085] Since the ink tank is mounted on the carrier, any ink supply tube and the like are no longer needed. Thus, it is possible to fabricate the apparatus smaller.

[0086] Also, when ink is totally consumed, it will suffice only if the ink tank is replaced, not the cartridge which is integrated with the head. Therefore, it is possible to reduce the running cost significantly.

[0087] Also, if either one of the recording head and ink tank needs to be replaced, it is possible to replace only the one which must be replaced. Thus, the operational economy is improved.

[0088] Also, when the recording head and ink tank are separated on the carrier by the use of a lever or the like, it is possible to control the speed with which the separation is carried out; thus preventing ink to be scattered from the ink supply inlet 10 and ink supply outlet 11.

[0089] Also, when the recording head and ink tank are separated on the carrier, there is no need for holding the recording head by hand directly. Accordingly, there is no possibility that a hand touches the vicinity of nozzles of the recording head 1. It is thus possible to prevent any unwanted contamination that may produce adverse effects on printing.

[0090] Also, when the recording head and ink tank are separated on the carrier, the portion where force exerted by the ink tank 2 can be specified. Therefore, the structure can be arranged so that it is made strong enough only against such specific portion. Consequently, any other portions than this can be fabricated thin; thus enabling the tank to be made light in its weight while increasing its volume. Also, if ink colors should be replaced, the recording heads and ink tanks can be replaced as they are still in the coupled state. There is no possibility that ink colors are mixed. The replacement can also be carried out simply.

[0091] Fig. 13 is a block diagram showing the electric circuits of another information processing apparatus.

[0092] In Fig. 13 a reference numeral 513 designates an ink tank sensor to detect whether the ink tank 2 is present on the carrier 102 or not, and 514, an ink remain sensor to detect the presence of printable ink in the ink tank 2. The description of any elements having the same reference numerals as those in Fig. 11 will be omitted.

[0093] More specifically, the ink tank sensor 513 may be such that mechanical contacts are arranged on the carrier 102, or a structure is arranged so as to provide an optical sensor for the purpose. The ink remain sensor 514 may be arranged in such a manner that by making the ink tank 2 with a transparent material so as to allow the remaining quantity to be detected optically from outside, or a sensor is provided in the ink tank 2 to sense the liquid therein and contacts are arranged on the surface of the ink tank connecting to such a sensor; thus arranging the contacts on the carrier 102.

[0094] With the above-mentioned sensors, it is possible to transmit to the CPU 502 information through the interface 506 to issue warning or execute appropriate processes when a recording operation is intended without the presence of ink tank 2 or recording head 1, or the related printing becomes disabled due to the shortage of the remaining ink during the recording operation.

[0095] For example, there is a possibility that the recording operation becomes disabled immediately after the ink tank 2 is connected to the recording head 1 because of air bubbles mixed in the recording head 1. In order to prevent this, it may be possible to arrange the system to interpret such a change in the status that while the recording head 1 is on the carrier 102, the ink tank 2 which is absent is now present as a case where an ink tank 2 is newly connected to the recording head in the on carrier condition, and to allow the carrier 102 to return to its home position for the suction operation by the recovery unit 301.

[0096] With the above-mentioned structure, the following effects can be obtained.

[0097] While in printing, if ink is totally consumed, the operation is automatically suspended and a warning is given accordingly. Thus, no recording medium will be wasted.

[0098] Also, after the replacement of ink tanks, there is no need for executing the recovery operation manually. Therefore, operativity will be improved.

[0099] Each of the embodiments set forth below can be preferably used for the foregoing ink jet recording apparatus.

[0100] Now, as an embodiment, a description will be made of a case where coupling indication marks are provided for a cartridge which stores an ink tank in a recording head housing. Fig. 14 is a schematical perspective view illustrating a recording head and ink tank according to the present embodiment. Fig. 15 is a plan view. In Fig. 14 a reference numeral 8200 designates a head housing and 8220, an ink tank. For the foregoing head housing 8200 there are provided an ink jet head 8201 to eject ink droplets; a supply tube 8202 to receive the ink supply from an ink tank 8220; a window 8203 to examine matching marks; matching marks 8204; finger stays 8205 for the removal of ink tank 8220; and locking nails 8206 to fix the ink tank 8220. For the foregoing ink tank 8220 there are provided matching lines 8221; finger stays 8222 for installation use; an ink supply outlet to

supply ink to the foregoing recording head 8201; and receptacles 8224 to receive the foregoing locking nails 8206.

[0101] The coupling of the ink tank 8220 is conducted by inserting the ink tank in the direction indicated by an arrow.

[0102] As shown in the left-hand side in Fig. 15 when the ink tank 8220 is inserted into the correct position, the matching mark 8204 of the head housing 8200 and the matching line 8221 of the ink tank 8220 are matched. Hence, it is easy to discriminate whether the installation is correctly conducted or not. If the installation is incorrect, the matching mark 8204 and matching line 8221 are displaced as shown in the right-hand side in Fig. 14. Since the examination window 8203 is diagonally provided with respect to the installation direction, even a slight displacement in the installation direction is emphatically indicated so as to make discrimination easier.

[0103] As still another embodiment, Fig. 16 illustrates a case where a click is provided for the coupling of a head cartridge and carrier in a mode that an ink tank is stored in the recording head housing. Fig. 16 is a schematically perspective view showing a recording head and ink tank according to the present embodiment. For each element which has the same function as above, the same reference mark is provided in the corresponding location, and the description thereof will be omitted.

[0104] In Fig. 16 the ink tank 8002b is installed in the direction indicated by an arrow A with respect to the recording head 8002a, and these are coupled by clicking of the nails 8002a6 arranged in two locations on the recording head side and the receptacles 8002a6 on the ink tank side. The recording head 8002a is installed in the direction indicated by an arrow B which is the same as the direction indicated by the arrow A with respect to the carrier 8001 and is coupled thereto by clicking of a spring 8001h and a receiving portion 8002a7. The ink tank 8002b can be replaced alone even in a state where the recording head 8002a is coupled to the carrier 8001, but since the ink tank 8002b and recording head 8002a are mounted or demounted in the same direction, the strength of the click for coupling for the ink tank 8002b should be set weaker than that of the click for coupling the recording head 8002a. In this way, when only the ink tank 8002b is replaced, it is possible to prevent the recording head 8002a from being removed together with the ink tank by mistake.

[0105] Also, as shown in Fig. 17 the installation direction of the recording head 8002a and that of the ink tank 8002b are made different. As a result, it becomes possible to reliably conduct the installations of the ink tank and recording head separately.

[0106] In Fig. 17 although the way to couple the ink tank 8002b and recording head 8002a are the same as the case described in conjunction with Fig. 85, the directions in which the recording head 8002a and carrier 8001 are coupled are different. In order to couple the recording head 8002a to the carrier 8001, the recording

head 8002a must be slight displaced at first before being mounted on the carrier 8001. If the amount of such a displacement is not enough, a pin 8002a9 is caused to butt a stop 8001k provided for the carrier to displace the recording head 8002a in the horizontal direction, at the same time preventing the intervention of the nails 8001m and receptacles 8002a8. When the recording head 8002a is mounted on the carrier as indicated by an arrow D, it is shifted in the horizontal direction to complete the installation by clicking of the nails 8001m on the carrier side and the receptacles 8002a8 on the recording head side.

[0107] As described above, each of the embodiments is effective by itself, but it may be possible to combine a plurality of these embodiments in order to provide an ink jet recording apparatus having a higher reliability.

[0108] In this respect, particularly among ink jet recording methods, the present invention produces an excellent effects on a recording head and recording apparatus which creates change of state in ink with means provided to generate thermal energy to be utilized for ejecting ink (electrothermal transducers, laser beam, or the like, for example).

[0109] Regarding the typical structure and operational principle of such a method, it is preferable to adopt those which can be implemented using the fundamental principle disclosed in the specifications of U.S. Patent Nos. 4,723,129 and 4,740,796. This method is applicable to so-called on-demand type recording system and a continuous type recording system. Particularly, however, it is suitable for the on-demand type because the principle is such that at least one driving signal, which provides a rapid temperature rise beyond a departure from nucleation boiling point in response to recording information, is applied to an electrothermal transducer disposed on a liquid (ink) retaining sheet or liquid passage whereby to cause the electrothermal transducer to generate thermal energy to produce film boiling on the thermoactive portion of the recording head; thus effectively leading to the resultant formation of a bubble in the recording liquid (ink) one to one for each of the driving signals. By the development and contraction of the bubble, the liquid (ink) is ejected through a discharging port to produce at least one droplet. The driving signal is preferably in the form of pulses because the development and contraction of the bubble can be effectuated instantaneously, and, therefore, the liquid (ink) is ejected with quick response.

[0110] The driving signal in the form of pulses is preferably such as disclosed in the specifications of U.S. Patent Nos. 4,463,359 and 4,345,262.

[0111] In addition, the temperature increasing rate of the heating surface is preferably such as disclosed in the specification of U.S. Patent No. 4,313,124 for an excellent recording in a better condition.

[0112] The structure of the recording head may be as shown in each of the above-mentioned the specifications wherein the structure is arranged to combine the

discharging ports, liquid passages, and the electrothermal transducers as disclosed in the above-mentioned patents (linear type liquid passage or right angle liquid passage). Besides, the structure such as disclosed in the specifications of U.S. Patent Nos. 4,558,333 and 4,459,600 wherein the thermal activation portions are arranged in a curved area is also included in the present invention.

[0113] In addition, the present invention is applicable to the structure disclosed in Japanese Laid-Open Application No. 59-123'670 wherein a common slit is used as the discharging ports for plural electrothermal transducers, and to the structure disclosed in Japanese Patent Laid-Open Application No. 59-138461 wherein an opening for absorbing pressure wave of the thermal energy is formed corresponding to the discharging ports. In other words, according to the present invention, it becomes possible to operate the recording assuredly irrespective of the modes of the recording head.

[0114] Furthermore, as a full line type recording head having a length corresponding to the maximum recording width, it may be possible to arrange a structure either by combining plural recording heads disclosed in the above-mentioned specifications or by a single recording head integrally constructed to cover such a length.

[0115] In addition, the present invention is applicable to a serial type recording head wherein the recording head is fixed on the main assembly, to a replaceable chip type recording head which is connected electrically with the main apparatus and can be supplied with ink when it is mounted in the main assembly, or to a cartridge type recording head having an integral ink container.

[0116] Also, it is preferable to additionally provide recording head recovery means and preliminarily auxiliary means which are arranged as constituents of a recording apparatus according to the present invention. These elements will contribute to making the effectiveness of the present invention more stabilized. To name them specifically, such elements are capping means for the recording head, cleaning means, compression or suction means, preliminary heating means such as electrothermal transducers or heating elements other than such transducing type or the combination of those types of elements, and the preliminary ejection mode besides the regular ejection for recording.

[0117] As regards the kind and number of the recording heads mountable on the carriage, it may be a single color ink, or may be plural heads corresponding to a plurality of ink materials having different recording color or density. The present invention is effectively applicable to an apparatus having at least one of a monochromatic mode mainly with black, a multi-color mode with different color ink materials and/or a full-color mode using the mixture of the colors, which may be an integrally formed recording unit or a combination of plural recording heads.

[0118] Now, in the embodiments, according to the

present invention set forth above, while the ink has been described as liquid, it may be an ink material which is solidified below the room temperature but liquefied at the room temperature. Since the ink is controlled within the temperature not lower than 30°C and not higher than 70°C to stabilize its viscosity for the provision of the stable ejection in general, the ink may be such that it can be liquefied when the applicable recording signals are given.

[0119] In addition, while preventing the temperature rise due to the thermal energy by the positive use of such energy as an energy consumed for changing states of the ink from solid to liquid, or using the ink which will be solidified when left intact for the purpose of preventing ink evaporation, it may be possible to apply to the present invention the use of an ink having a nature of being liquefied only by the application of thermal energy such as an ink capable of being ejected as ink liquid by enabling itself to be liquefied anyway when the thermal energy is given in accordance with recording signals, an ink which will have already begun solidifying itself by the time it reaches a recording medium.

[0120] For an ink such as this, it may be possible to retain the ink as a liquid or solid material in through holes or recesses formed in a porous sheet as disclosed in Japanese Patent Laid-Open Application No. 54-56847 or Japanese Patent Laid-Open Application No. 60-71260 in order to execute a mode whereby to enable the ink to face the electrothermal transducers in such a state.

[0121] For the present invention, the most effective method for each of the above-mentioned ink materials is the one which can implement the film boiling method described above.

[0122] Furthermore, as modes of the foregoing ink jet recording apparatus, a copying apparatus combined with reader and the like or a facsimile apparatus having transmission reception functions or the like may be employed in addition to those used as an image output terminal of an information processing apparatus such as a computer.

Claims

1. An ink jet cartridge removably mountable on a carriage of an ink jet apparatus, said cartridge comprising:

a head housing provided with an ink jet head (8201); and
an ink tank housing (8220) for storing ink to be supplied to said ink jet head,

characterised in that said head housing has a frame member for supporting said ink jet head and accommodating said ink tank housing, said frame member having an engaging portion (8206) for en-

- gaging with said ink tank housing and a cutout portion for forming a finger-grippable portion for removing and mounting said ink tank housing, and wherein said ink tank housing (8220) has an engaging portion (8224) for engaging with said engaging portion (8206) of said frame member and said ink tank housing further has a finger-grippable portion (8222) for removing and mounting said ink tank housing.
2. A cartridge according to claim 1, wherein said head housing is provided with an ink supply tube (8202) for supplying ink to said ink jet head, said ink supply tube projecting into said frame member.
 3. A cartridge according to claim 2, wherein said ink tank housing is insertable into said head housing and said ink supply tube (8202) is arranged to be inserted into an ink supply port provided on said ink tank housing upon insertion of said ink tank housing into said head housing so as to enable ink supply to the ink jet head.
 4. A cartridge according to claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein said ink tank housing (8220) is provided with a line (8221) capable of confirming a mounting condition to said head housing.
 5. A cartridge according to claim 4, wherein said head housing has a mounting mark (8204) capable of confirming a mounting condition of said ink tank housing to said head housing, said mark being arranged to align with said line (8221) when the ink tank and head housings are engaged.
 6. A cartridge according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein said engaging portion (8206) of said frame member is elastically deformable and is arranged to be elastically deformed to complete the engagement with said engaging portion (8224) of said ink tank housing when said engaging portions engage.
 7. A cartridge according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said frame member has an opening for enabling removal of said ink tank housing (8220) on a side opposite to a side on which the ink jet head (8201) is provided.
 8. A cartridge according to claim 1, wherein said ink tank housing and said head housing are removably mounted on a carriage of an ink jet apparatus when said ink tank housing is connected to said head housing.
 9. An ink jet cartridge removably mountable on a carriage of an ink jet apparatus, said cartridge comprising:
 - a head housing provided with an ink jet head (8002a) and a receiving portion for receiving an ink tank for storing ink to be supplied to said head; and
 - an ink tank (8002b) removably mounted on said receiving portion to store ink to be supplied to said head,

characterised in that said receiving portion has an opening capable of removably mounting said ink tank, which opening opens upwardly of a direction in which said head housing is arranged to be mounted onto said carriage so as to be contained in any upwardly opening carriage opening, and **In that** said ink tank is removably mounted when said head housing is mounted or not mounted on said carriage.
 10. A cartridge according to claim 9, wherein said ink jet head (8002a) is provided with an ink supply tube (8002a4) projecting to the opening for mounting said ink tank (8002b) therethrough and said ink supply tube (8002a4) is arranged to be inserted into said ink tank (8002b) when mounting said ink jet head.
 11. A cartridge according to claim 9, wherein said ink tank (8002b) is provided with connecting portions (8002b6) for connecting said ink tank (8002b) to said head housing and said head housing has connecting portions (8002a6) to be connected to said connecting portions of said ink tank (8002b) and said head housing has a further connecting portion (8002a7) or portions (8002a9) arranged to be connected to said carriage (8001).
 12. A cartridge according to claim 11, wherein said carriage (8001) is provided with a connecting portion (8001h) or portions (8001k) to be connected to said further connecting portion (8002a7) or portions (8002a9) of said head housing.
 13. A cartridge according to claim 9, wherein said ink tank is provided with finger-grippable portions for removably mounting it.
 14. An ink jet cartridge removably mountable on the carriage of an ink jet printer, said cartridge comprising a head housing (8200) provided with an ink jet head (8201) and a separate ink tank housing (8220) for storing ink to be supplied to the ink jet head, and **characterised in that** the head housing has walls defining a recess into which the ink tank housing is inserted when the ink jet head is to be coupled to the ink tank housing, at least one wall having a cut-away portion which exposes a finger-grippable portion (8222) on the ink tank housing when the two housings are coupled, the two housings having

complementary clip means (8206, 8224) for holding the two housings together.

Patentansprüche

1. Tintenstrahlpatrone, die an einem Schlitten eines Tintenstrahlgeräts entferntbar angeordnet ist, wobei die Patrone aufweist:

- ein Kopfgehäuse, das mit einem Tintenstrahlkopf (8201) versehen ist, und
- ein Tintenbehältergehäuse (8220) zum Vorhalten von Tinte, die dem Tintenstrahlkopf zuzuführen ist,

dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Kopfgehäuse ein Rahmenelement zum Tragen des Tintenstrahlkopfs und zum Aufnehmen des Tintenbehältergehäuses aufweist, wobei das Rahmenelement einen Betätigungsabschnitt (8206) zum Eingriff in das Tintenbehältergehäuse und einen Ausnehmungsabschnitt zum Ausbilden eines Anfaßabschnitts zum Entfernen und Anordnen des Tintenbehältergehäuses aufweist, und wobei das Tintenbehältergehäuse (8220) einen Eingriffsabschnitt (8224) zum Eingriff des Betätigungsabschnitts (8206) des Rahmenelements aufweist, und das Tintenbehältergehäuse ferner einen Anfaßabschnitt (8222) zum Entfernen und Anordnen des Tintenbehältergehäuses aufweist.

2. Patrone gemäß Anspruch 1, wobei das Kopfgehäuse mit einem Tintenzuführrohr (8202) zum Zuführen von Tinte zu dem Tintenstrahlkopf versehen ist, wobei das Tintenzuführrohr in das Rahmenelement vorsteht.

3. Patrone gemäß Anspruch 2, wobei das Tintenbehältergehäuse in das Kopfgehäuse einfügbar ist und das Tintenzuführrohr (8202) eingerichtet ist, beim Einfügen des Tintenbehältergehäuses in das Kopfgehäuse in eine in dem Tintenbehältergehäuse vorgesehene Tintenzuführöffnung eingefügt zu werden, um die Tintenzuführung zu dem Tintenstrahlkopf zu ermöglichen.

4. Patrone gemäß Anspruch 1, 2 oder 3, wobei das Tintenbehältergehäuse (8220) mit einer Linie (8221) versehen ist, durch die ein Anordnungszustand an dem Kopfgehäuse bestätigt werden kann.

5. Patrone gemäß Anspruch 4, wobei das Kopfgehäuse eine Anordnungsmarkierung (8204) aufweist, die es ermöglicht, einen Anordnungszustand des Tintenbehältergehäuses an dem Kopfgehäuse zu bestätigen, wobei die Markierung angeordnet ist, um mit der Linie (8221) in Ausrichtung zu sein,

wenn der Tintenbehälter und das Kopfgehäuse im Eingriff sind.

6. Patrone gemäß einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 5, wobei der Betätigungsabschnitt (8206) des Rahmenelements elastisch verformbar ist und angeordnet ist, um elastisch verformt zu werden, um den Eingriff in den Eingriffsabschnitt (8224) des Tintenbehältergehäuses zu vollenden, wenn die Betätigungsabschnitte in Eingriff gelangen.

7. Patrone gemäß einem der vorhergehenden Ansprüche, wobei das Rahmenelement eine Öffnung aufweist, um das Entfernen des Tintenbehältergehäuses (8220) auf einer Seite entgegengesetzt zu einer Seite zu ermöglichen, auf welcher der Tintenstrahlkopf (8201) angeordnet ist.

8. Patrone gemäß Anspruch 1, wobei das Tintenbehältergehäuse und das Kopfgehäuse an einem Schlitten eines Tintenstrahlgeräts entferntbar angeordnet sind, wenn das Tintenbehältergehäuse mit dem Kopfgehäuse verbunden ist.

9. Tintenstrahlpatrone, die an einem Schlitten eines Tintenstrahlgeräts entferntbar angeordnet ist, wobei die Patrone aufweist:

- ein Kopfgehäuse, das mit einem Tintenstrahlkopf (8002a) und einem Aufnahmeabschnitt zur Aufnahme eines Tintenbehälters zum Vorhalten von dem Aufzeichnungskopf zuzuführender Tinte versehen ist, und
- einen Tintenbehälter (8002b), der an dem Aufnahmeabschnitt entferntbar angeordnet ist, zum Vorhalten von Tinte, die dem Tintenstrahlkopf zuzuführen ist,

dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß der Aufnahmeabschnitt eine Öffnung aufweist, welche das Anordnen und Entfernen des Tintenbehälters ermöglicht, wobei die Öffnung nach oben in eine Richtung offen ist, in welcher das Kopfgehäuse an dem Schlitten angeordnet wird, um in einer nach oben offenen Schlittenöffnung aufgenommen zu werden, **und dadurch, daß** der Tintenbehälter entferntbar angeordnet ist, wenn das Kopfgehäuse an dem Schlitten angeordnet oder nicht angeordnet ist.

10. Patrone gemäß Anspruch 9, wobei der Tintenstrahlkopf (8002a) mit einem Tintenzuführrohr (8002a4) versehen ist, das in die Öffnung zur Anordnung des Tintenbehälters (8002b) vorsteht, und das Tintenzuführrohr (8002a4) angeordnet ist, um beim Anordnen des Tintenstrahlkopfs in den Tintenbehälter (8002b) eingefügt zu werden.

11. Patrone gemäß Anspruch 9, wobei der Tintenbehälter (8002b) mit Verbindungsabschnitten (8002b6) zum Verbinden des Tintenbehälters (8002b) mit dem Kopfgehäuse versehen ist und das Kopfgehäuse Verbindungsabschnitte (8002a6) aufweist, um mit den Verbindungsabschnitten des Tintenbehälters (8002b) verbunden zu werden, und das Kopfgehäuse einen weiteren Verbindungsabschnitt (8002a7) oder Verbindungsabschnitte (8002a9) aufweist, die angeordnet sind, um mit dem Schlitten (8001) verbunden zu werden. 5
12. Patrone gemäß Anspruch 11, wobei der Schlitten (8001) mit einem Verbindungsabschnitt (8001h) oder Verbindungsabschnitten (8001k) versehen ist, um mit dem weiteren Verbindungsabschnitt (8002a7) oder weiteren Verbindungsabschnitten (8002a9) des Kopfgehäuses verbunden zu werden. 10 15
13. Patrone gemäß Anspruch 9, wobei der Tintenbehälter mit Anfaßabschnitten versehen ist, um diesen anzuordnen und zu entfernen. 20
14. Tintenstrahlpatrone, die an dem Schlitten eines Tintenstrahl Druckers entfernbar angeordnet ist, wobei die Patrone ein Kopfgehäuse (8200) aufweist, das mit einem Tintenstrahlkopf (8201) versehen ist, und ein separates Tintenbehältergehäuse (8220) zum Vorhalten von Tinte, die dem Tintenstrahlkopf zuzuführen ist, und 25
- dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß** das Kopfgehäuse Wände aufweist, die eine Ausnehmung definieren, in welche das Tintenbehältergehäuse eingefügt wird, wenn der Tintenstrahlkopf mit dem Tintenbehältergehäuse verbunden wird, mindestens eine Wand mit einem Ausnehmungsabschnitt, welcher einen Anfaßabschnitt (8222) auf dem Tintenbehältergehäuse freigibt, wenn die zwei Gehäuse verbunden sind, wobei die zwei Gehäuse sich ergänzende Klemmvorrichtungen (8206, 8224) zum Zusammenhalten der zwei Gehäuse aufweisen. 30 35 40

Revendications

1. Cartouche à jet d'encre pouvant être montée de façon amovible sur un chariot d'un appareil à jet d'encre, ladite cartouche comportant :

un boîtier de tête pourvu d'une tête (8201) à jet d'encre ; et
un boîtier (8220) de réservoir d'encre destiné à emmagasiner de l'encre devant être fournie à ladite tête à jet d'encre,

caractérisée en ce que ledit boîtier de tête comporte un élément de bâti destiné à supporter ladite tête à jet d'encre et à loger ledit boîtier de ré-

servoir d'encre, ledit élément de bâti ayant une partie d'engagement (8206) destinée à réaliser un engagement avec ledit boîtier de réservoir d'encre et une partie découpée destinée à former une partie pouvant être prise avec les doigts pour enlever et monter ledit boîtier de réservoir d'encre, et dans laquelle ledit boîtier (8220) du réservoir d'encre comporte une partie d'engagement (8224) destinée à réaliser un engagement avec ladite partie d'engagement (8206) dudit élément de bâti et ledit boîtier du réservoir d'encre comporte en outre une partie (8222) pouvant être prise avec les doigts pour l'enlèvement et le montage dudit boîtier de réservoir d'encre.

2. Cartouche selon la revendication 1, dans laquelle ledit boîtier de tête est pourvu d'un tube (8202) d'alimentation en encre pour l'alimentation en encre de ladite tête à jet d'encre, ledit tube d'alimentation en encre faisant saillie dans ledit élément de bâti.
3. Cartouche selon la revendication 2, dans laquelle ledit boîtier de réservoir d'encre peut être introduit dans ledit boîtier de tête et ledit tube (8202) d'alimentation en encre est agencé de façon à être introduit dans un orifice d'alimentation en encre prévu sur ledit boîtier du réservoir d'encre lors de l'introduction dudit boîtier du réservoir d'encre dans ledit boîtier de tête afin de permettre une alimentation en encre de la tête à jet d'encre.
4. Cartouche selon la revendication 1, 2 ou 3, dans laquelle ledit boîtier (8220) de réservoir d'encre est pourvu d'une ligne (8221) permettant de confirmer un état de montage dudit boîtier de tête.
5. Cartouche selon la revendication 4, dans laquelle ledit boîtier de tête comporte un repère de montage (8204) permettant de confirmer un état de montage dudit boîtier de réservoir d'encre sur ledit boîtier de tête, ledit repère étant agencé de façon à s'aligner avec ladite ligne (8221) lorsque les boîtiers de réservoir d'encre et de tête sont engagés.
6. Cartouche selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 5, dans laquelle ladite partie d'engagement (8206) dudit élément de bâti peut être déformée élastiquement et est agencée de façon à être déformée élastiquement pour achever l'engagement avec ladite partie d'engagement (8224) dudit boîtier de réservoir d'encre lorsque lesdites parties d'engagement sont engagées.
7. Cartouche selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans laquelle ledit élément de bâti présente une ouverture destinée à permettre d'enlever ledit boîtier (8220) du réservoir d'encre sur un côté opposé à un côté sur lequel la tête à jet

d'encre (8201) est prévue.

8. Cartouche selon la revendication 1, dans laquelle ledit boîtier du réservoir d'encre et ledit boîtier de tête sont montés de façon amovible sur un chariot d'un appareil à jet d'encre lorsque ledit boîtier de réservoir d'encre est raccordé audit boîtier de tête.

9. Cartouche à jet d'encre pouvant être montée de façon amovible sur un chariot d'un appareil à jet d'encre, ladite cartouche comportant :

un boîtier de tête pourvu d'une tête (8002a) à jet d'encre et d'une partie de réception destinée à recevoir un réservoir d'encre destiné à emmagasiner de l'encre devant être fournie à ladite tête ; et
un réservoir d'encre (8002b) monté de façon amovible sur ladite partie de réception pour emmagasiner de l'encre devant être fournie à ladite tête,

caractérisée en ce que ladite partie de réception présente une ouverture permettant un montage amovible dudit réservoir d'encre, laquelle ouverture débouche vers le haut d'une direction dans laquelle ledit boîtier de tête est agencé pour être monté sur ledit chariot enfin d'être contenu dans une ouverture quelconque du chariot débouchant vers le haut, et **en ce que** ledit réservoir d'encre est monté de façon amovible lorsque ledit boîtier de tête est monté ou n'est pas monté sur ledit chariot.

10. Cartouche selon la revendication 9, dans laquelle ladite tête (8002a) à jet d'encre est pourvue d'un tube (8002a4) d'alimentation en encre faisant saillie vers l'ouverture pour le montage dudit réservoir d'encre (8002b) à travers elle et ledit tube (8002a4) d'alimentation en encre est agencé de façon à être introduit dans ledit réservoir d'encre (8002b) lors du montage de ladite tête à jet d'encre.

11. Cartouche selon la revendication 9, dans laquelle ledit réservoir d'encre (8002b) est pourvu de parties de raccordement (8002b6) pour raccorder ledit réservoir d'encre (8002b) audit boîtier de tête et ledit boîtier de tête comporte des parties de raccordement (8002a6) destinées à être raccordées auxdites parties de raccordement dudit réservoir d'encre (8002b) et ledit boîtier de tête comporte une autre partie de raccordement (8002a7) ou des parties (8002a9) agencées de façon à être raccordées audit chariot (8001).

12. Cartouche selon la revendication 11, dans laquelle ledit chariot (8001) est pourvu d'une partie de raccordement (8001h) ou de parties (8001k) destinées

à être raccordées à ladite autre partie de raccordement (8002a7) ou auxdites autres parties (8002a9) dudit boîtier de tête.

- 5 13. Cartouche selon la revendication 9, dans laquelle ledit réservoir d'encre est pourvu de parties pouvant être prises avec les doigts pour son montage amovible.

- 10 14. Cartouche à jet d'encre pouvant être montée de façon amovible sur le chariot d'une imprimante à jet d'encre, ladite cartouche comportant un boîtier de tête (8200) pourvu d'une tête (8201) à jet d'encre et un boîtier séparé (8220) de réservoir d'encre destiné à emmagasiner de l'encre devant être fournie à la tête à jet d'encre, et **caractérisée en ce que** le boîtier de tête comporte des parois définissant un évidement dans lequel le boîtier de réservoir d'encre est introduit lorsque la tête à jet d'encre doit être accouplée au boîtier de réservoir d'encre, au moins une paroi ayant une partie découpée qui met à découvert une partie (8222) pouvant être prise avec les doigts sur le boîtier du réservoir d'encre lorsque les deux boîtiers sont accouplés, les deux boîtiers ayant des moyens d'encliquetage complémentaires (8206, 8224) pour maintenir les deux boîtiers assemblés.

FIG. 1

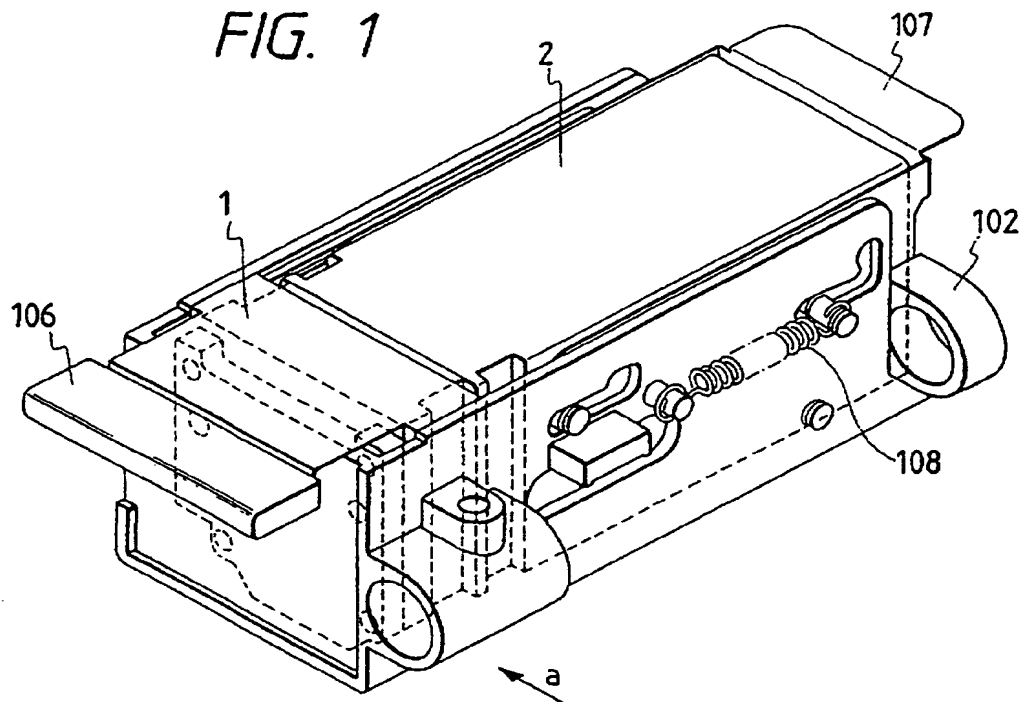


FIG. 2

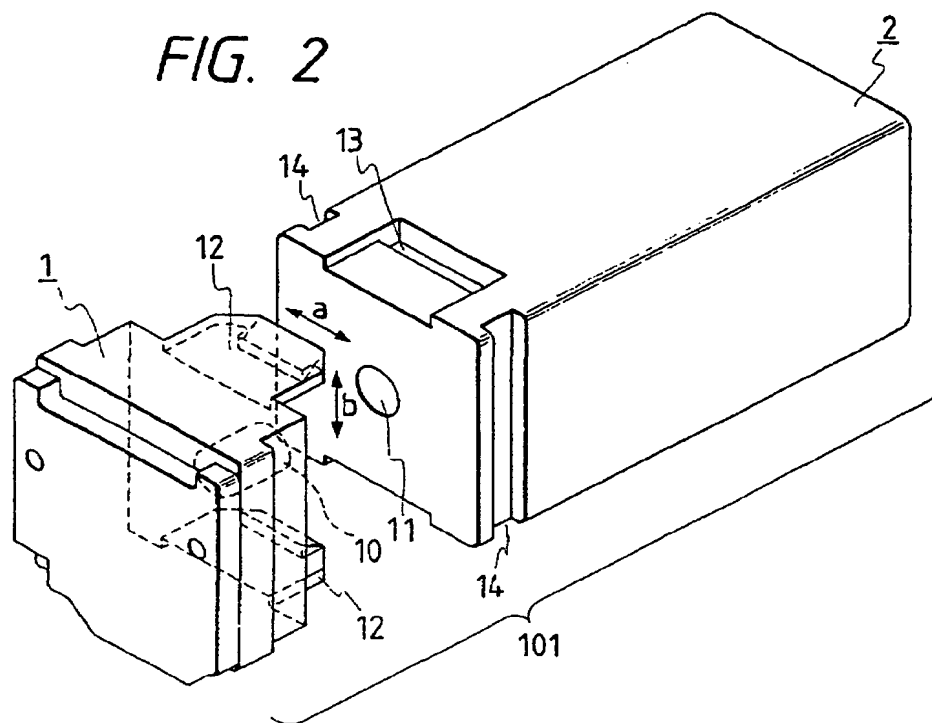


FIG. 3

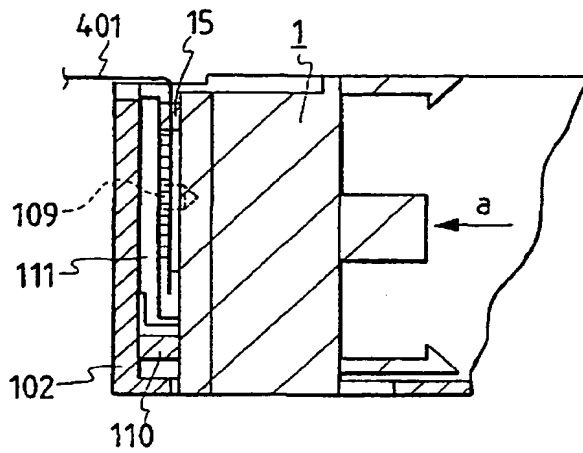


FIG. 4

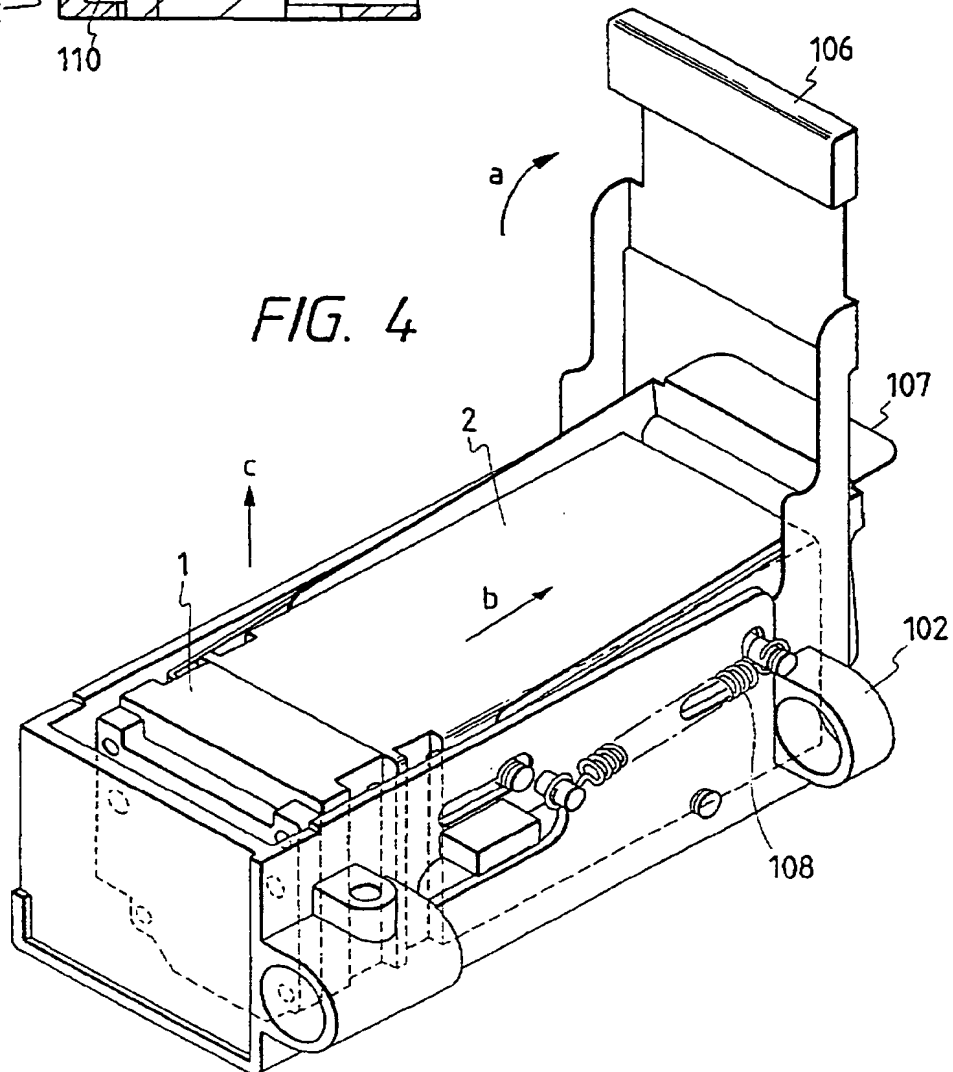


FIG. 5

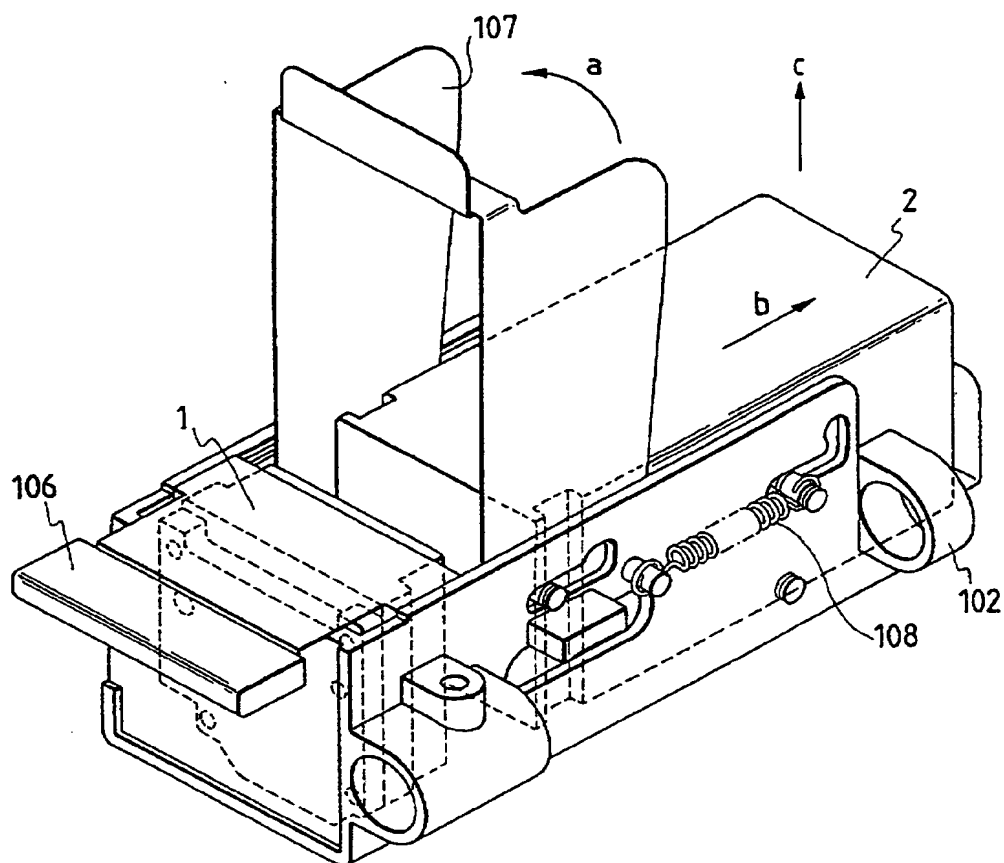


FIG. 6

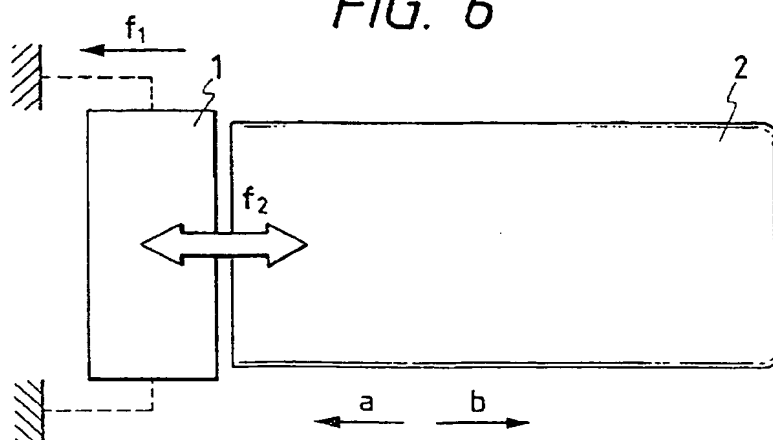


FIG. 7

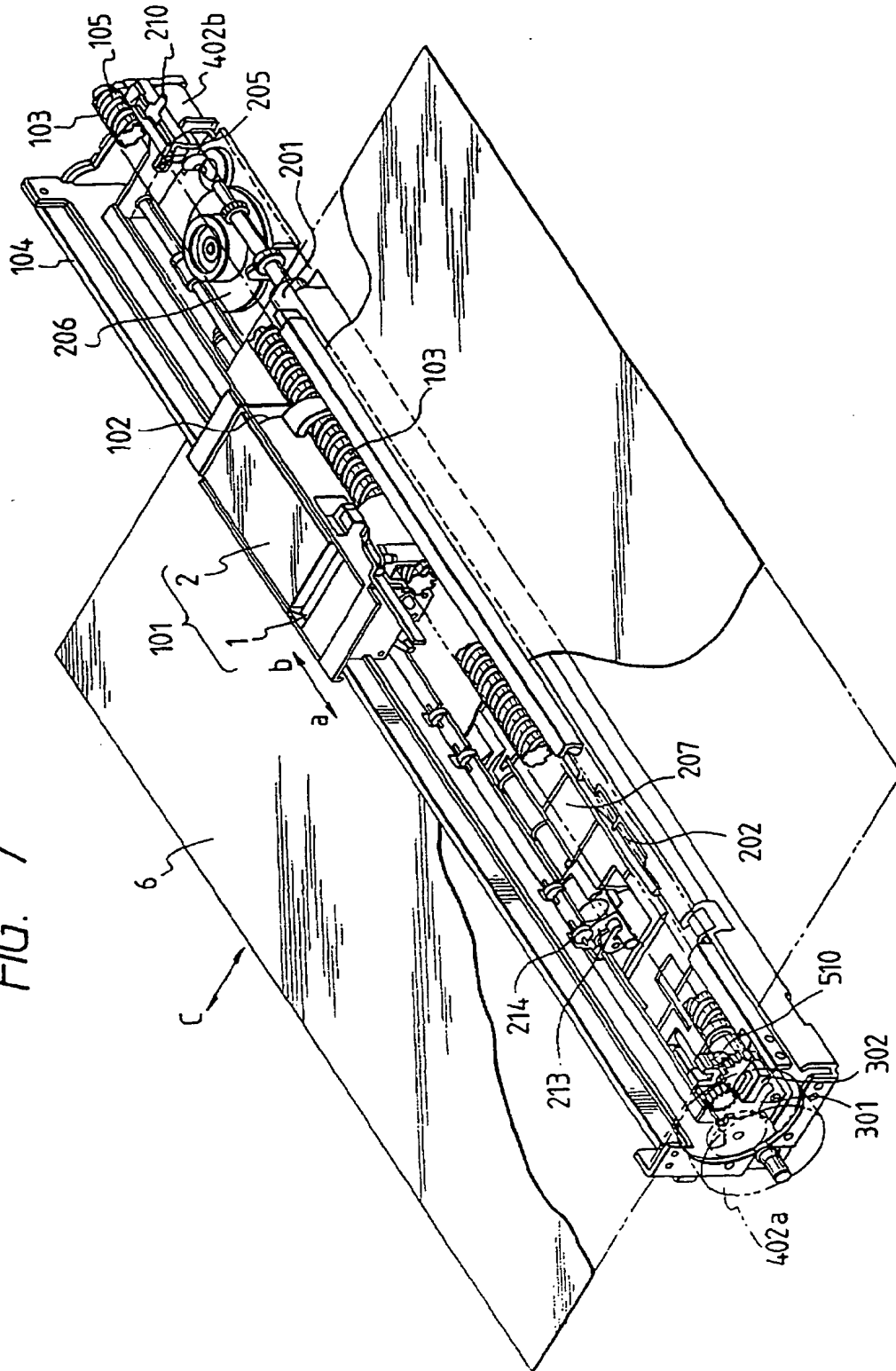


FIG. 8

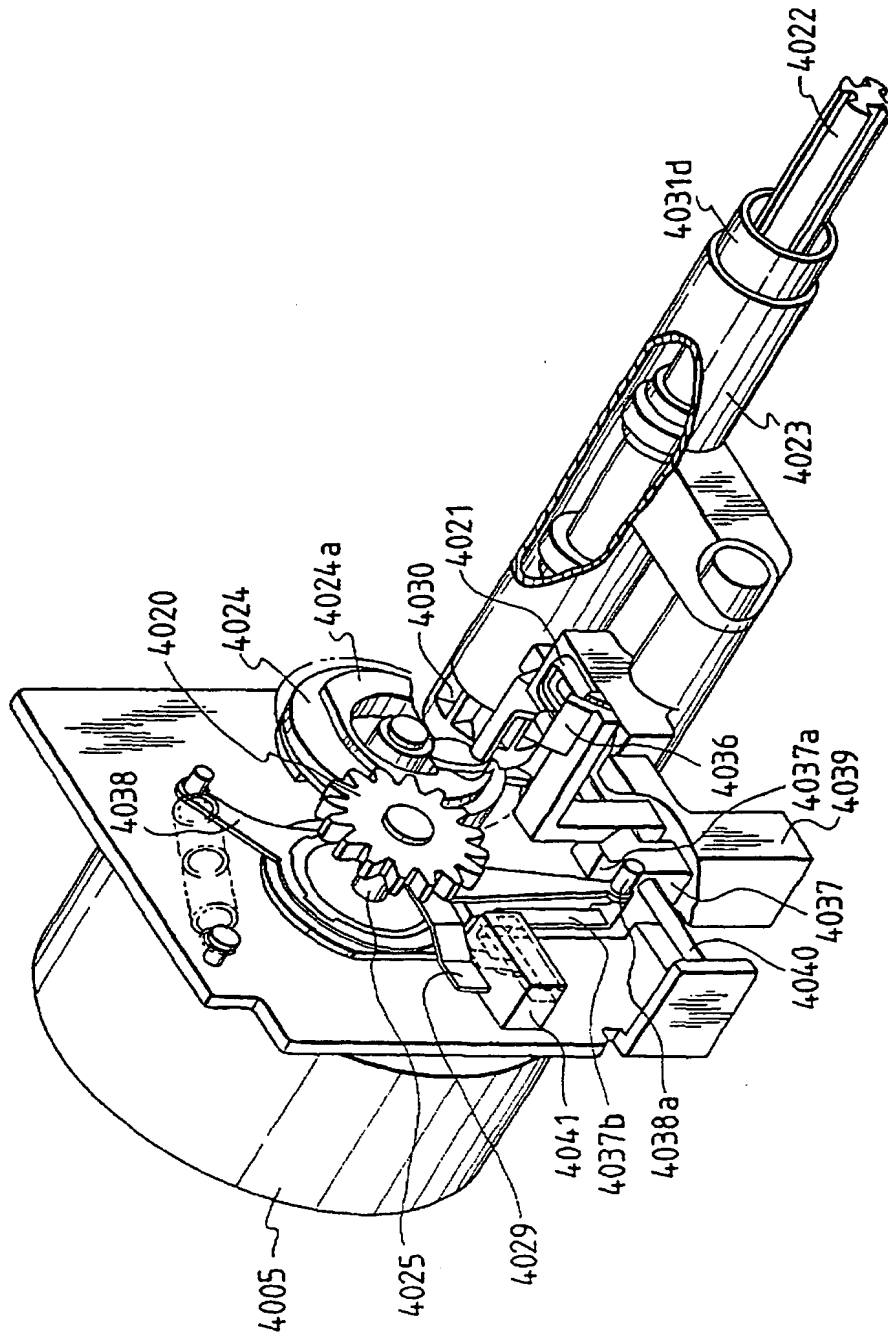


FIG. 9

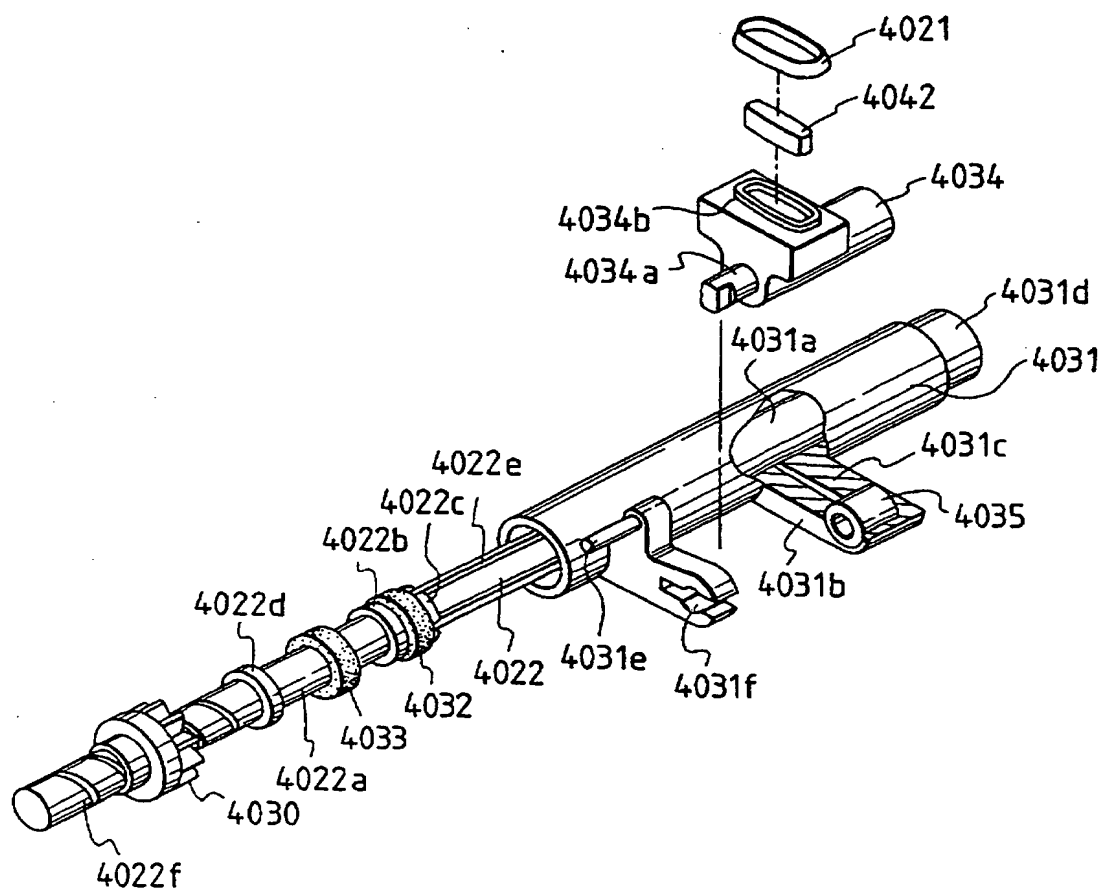


FIG. 10A

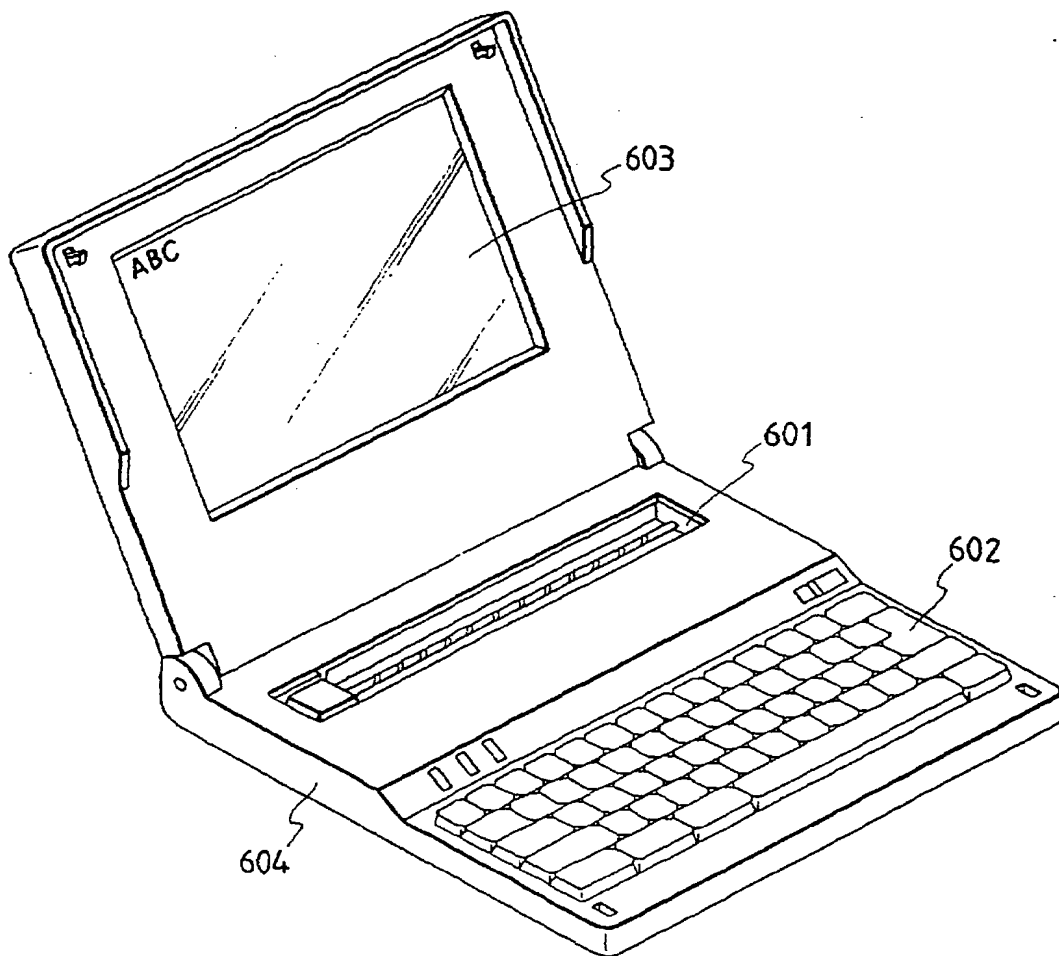
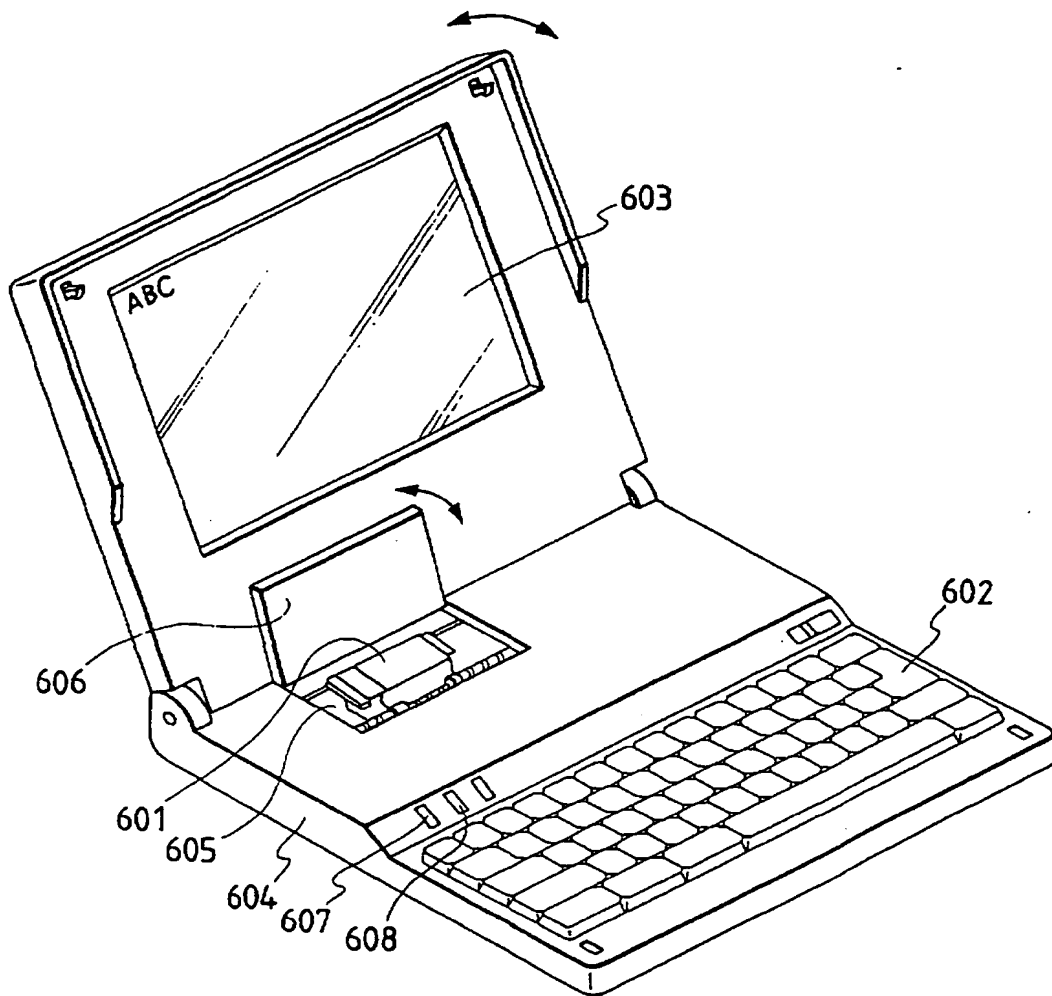


FIG. 10B



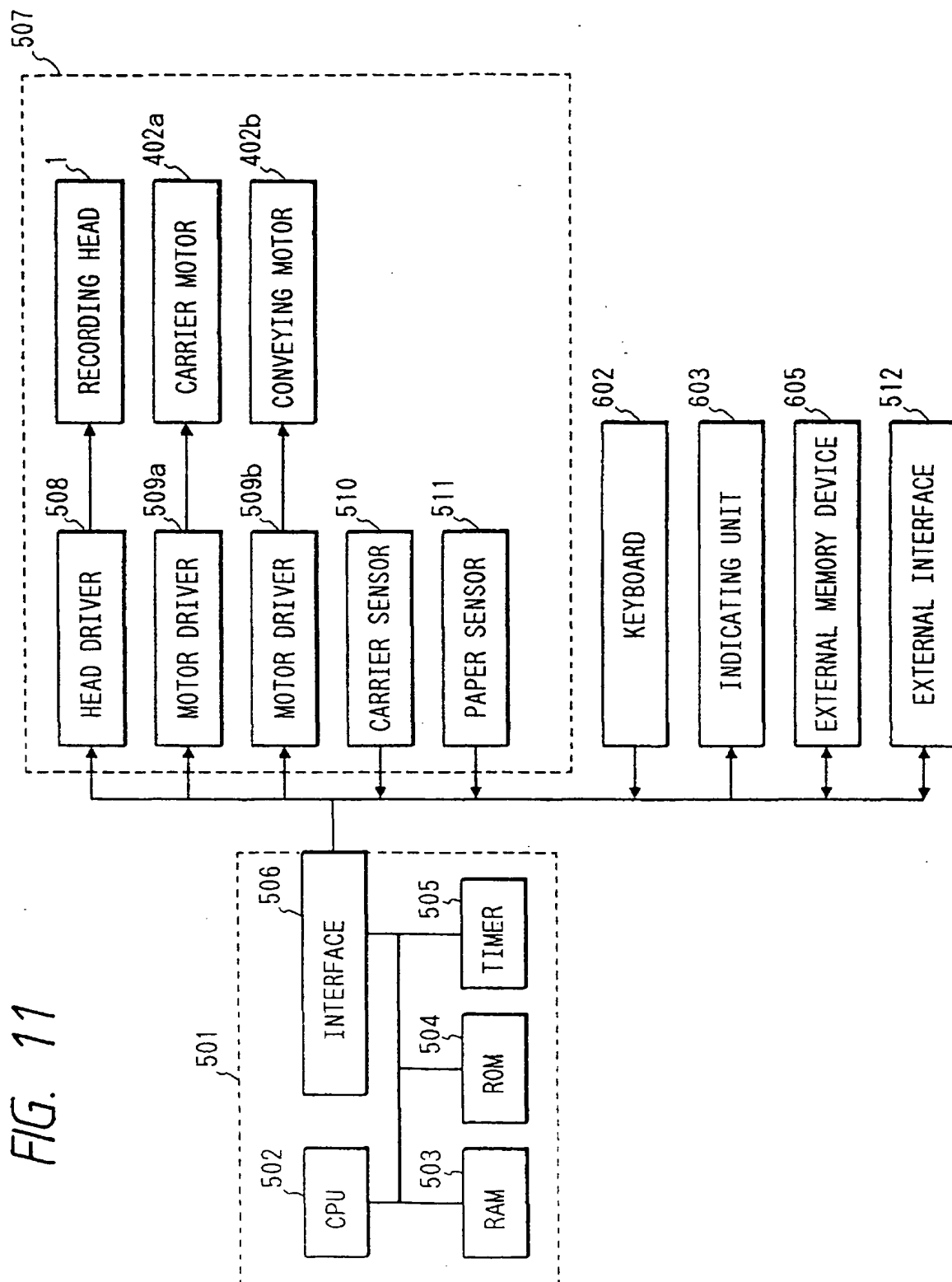


FIG. 12

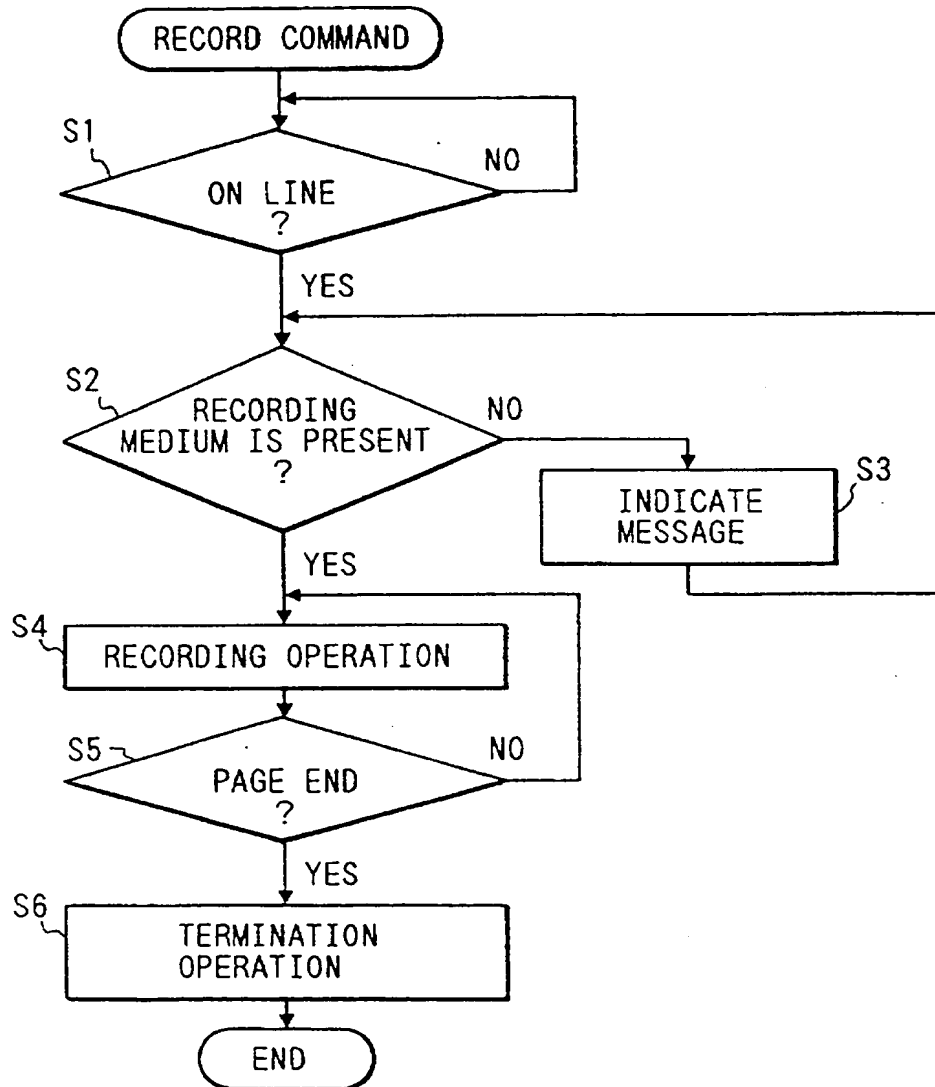


FIG. 13

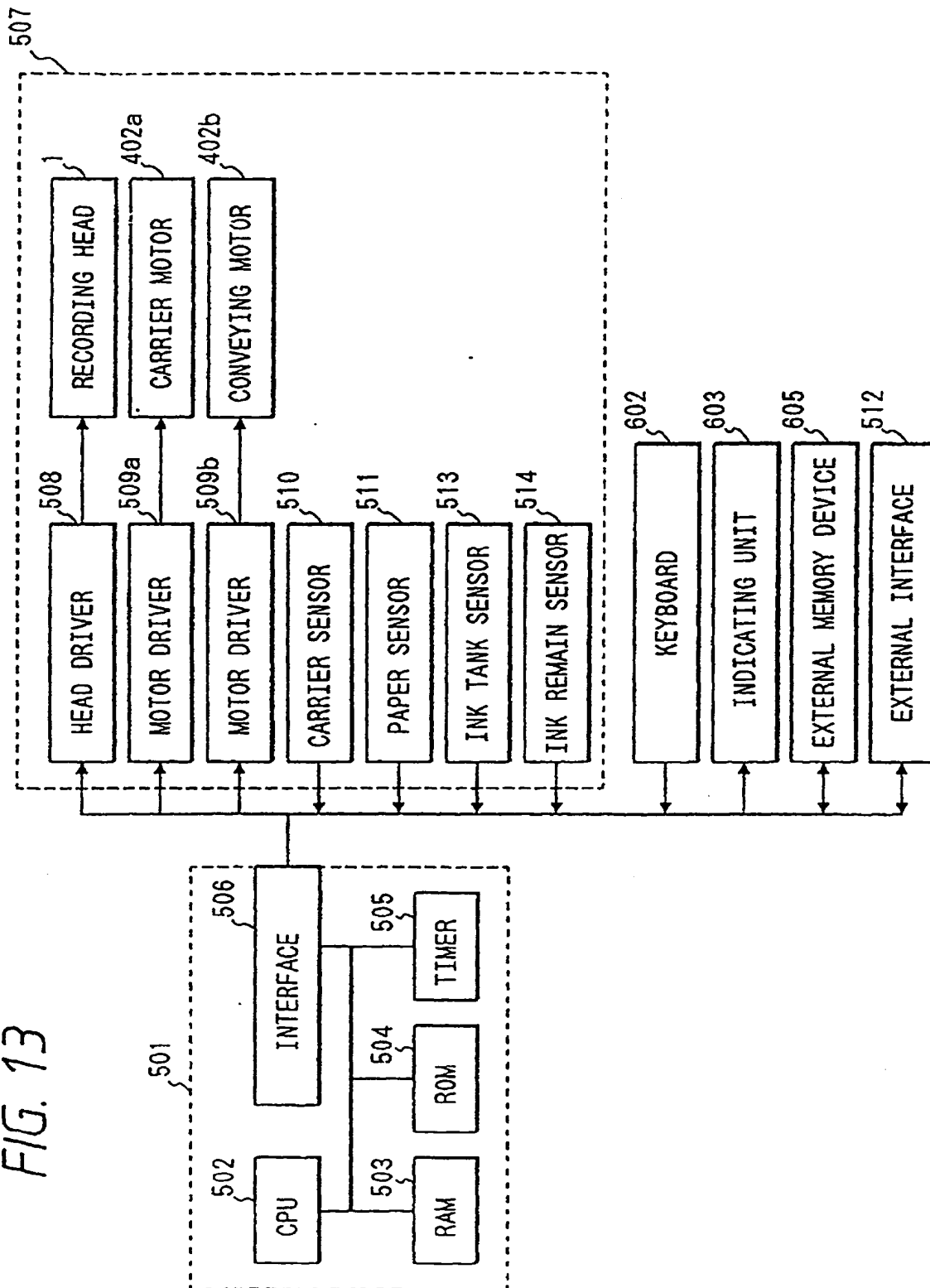


FIG. 14

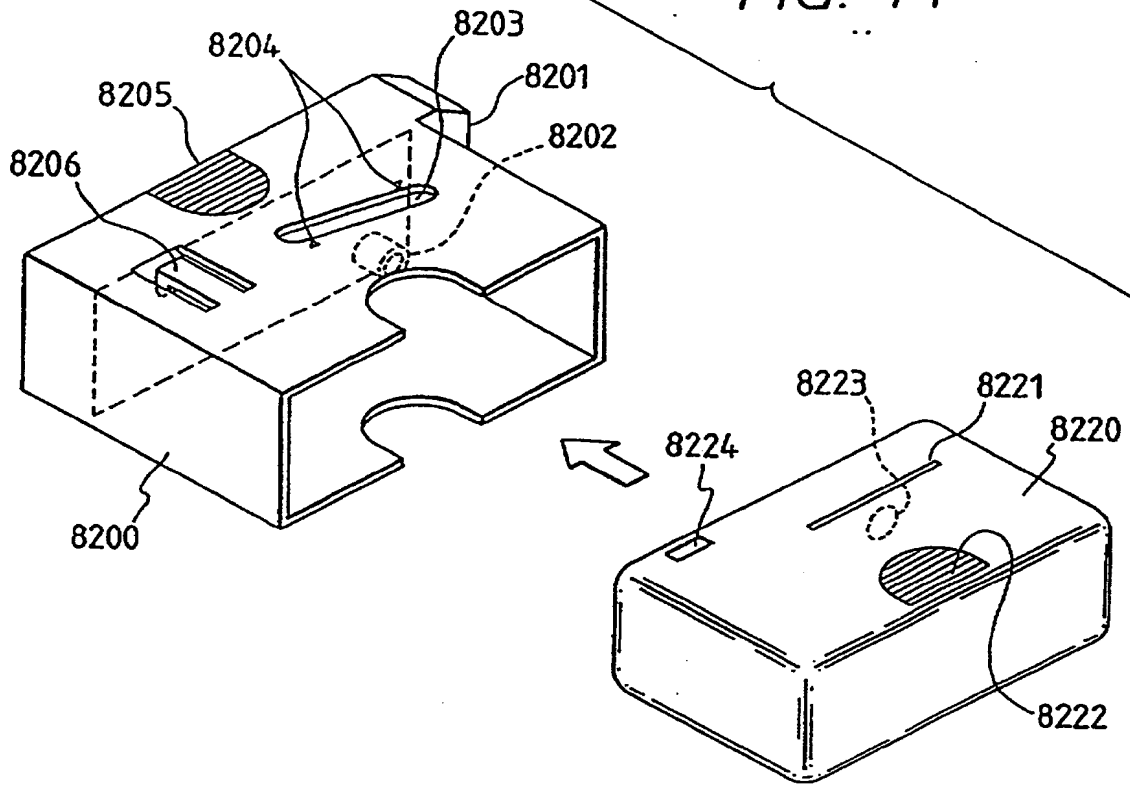


FIG. 15

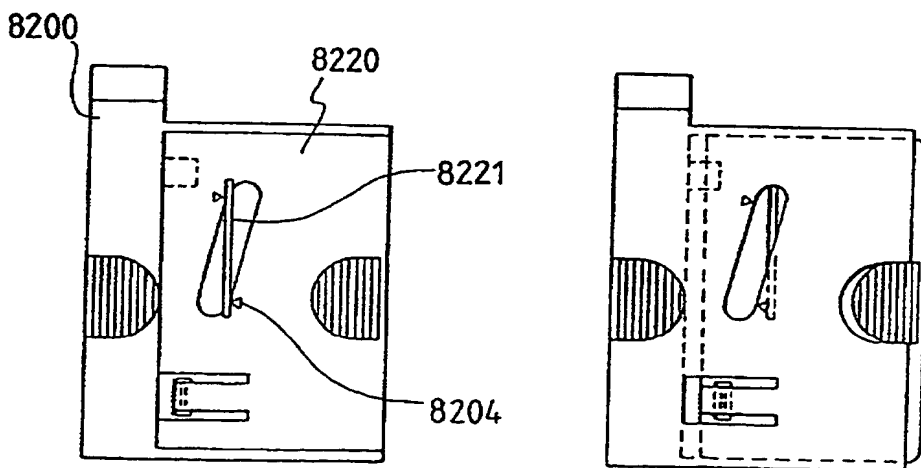


FIG. 16

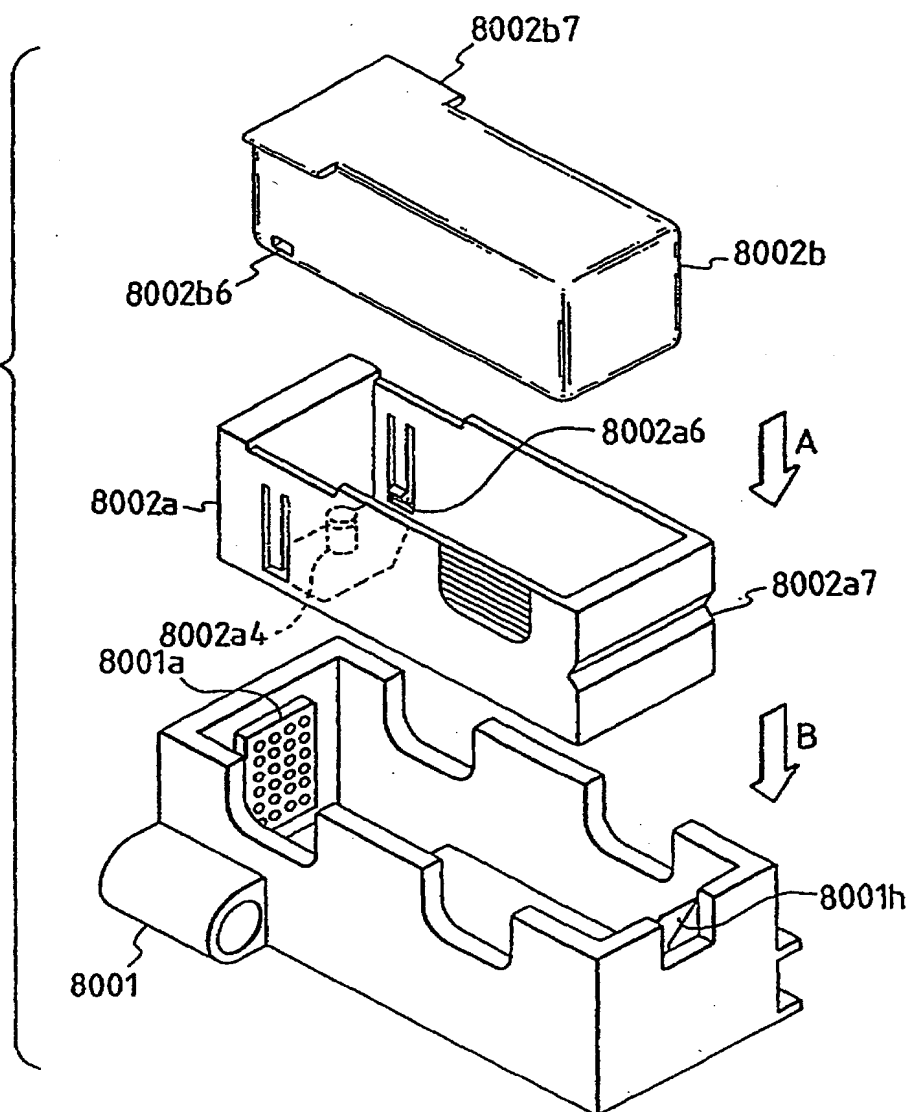


FIG. 17

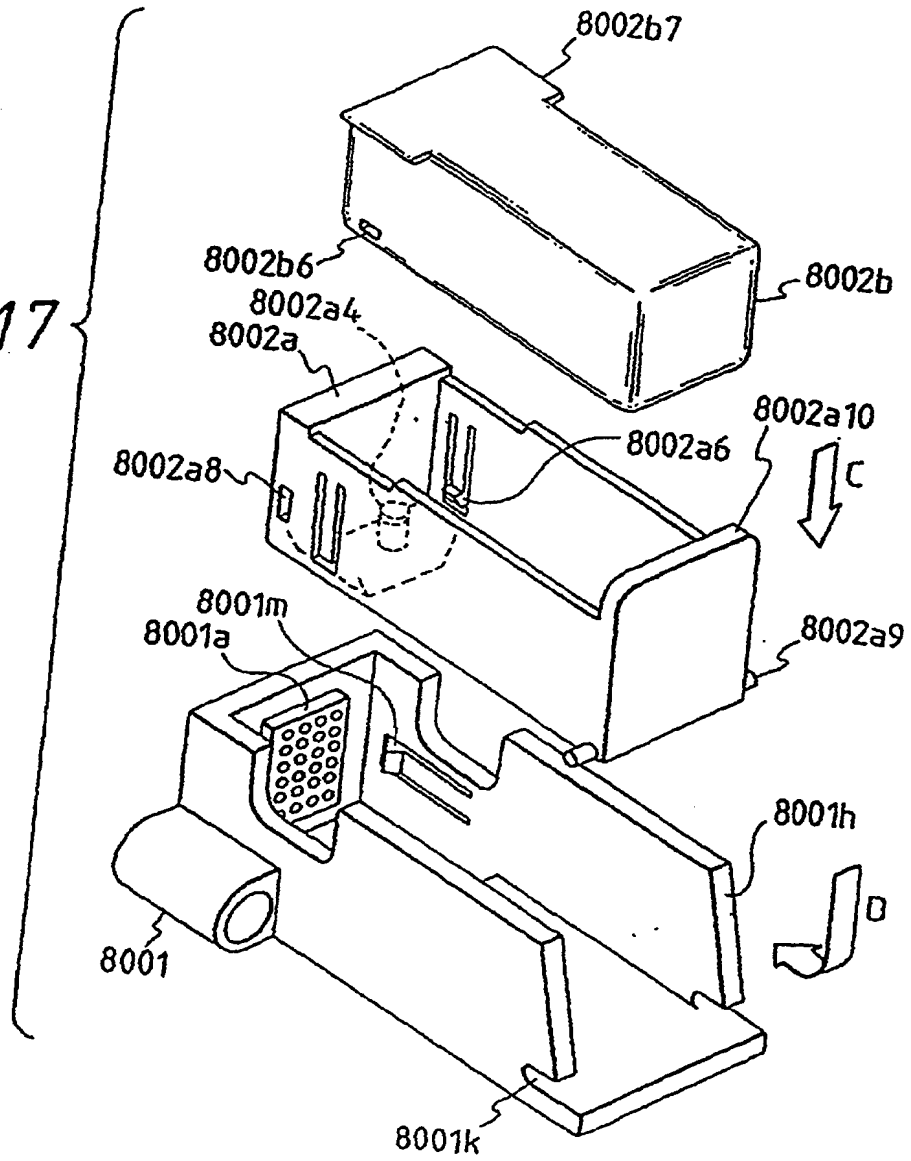


FIG. 18.

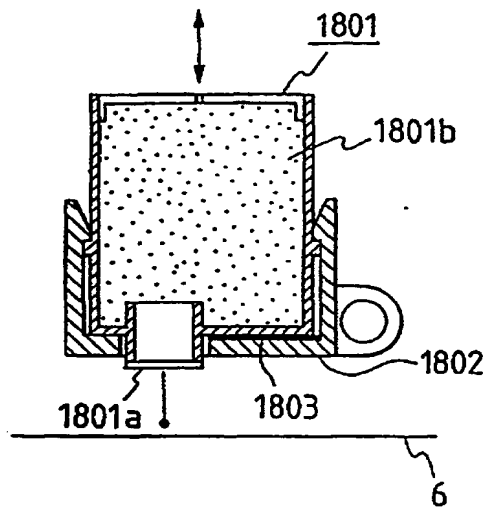


FIG. 20

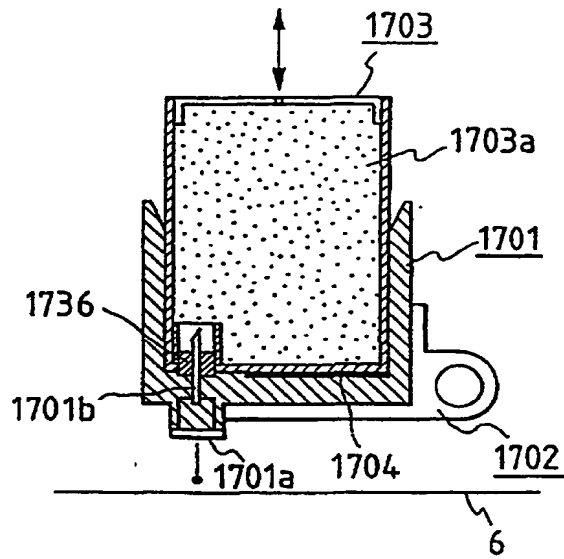


FIG. 19

